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# ROBERT E. LEE

## MAN AND SOLDIER

## *By Thomas Nelson Page*

THE LAND OF THE SPIRIT
JOHN MARVEL, ASSISTANT
GORDON KEITH
RED ROCK
ON NEWFOUND RIVER
THE OLD GENTLEMAN OF THE BLACK STOCK
IN OLE VIRGINIA
UNDER THE CRUST
BRED IN THE BONE
THE BURIAL OF THE GUNS
PASTIME STORIES
ELSKET, AND OTHER STORIES
RED RIDERS

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ITALY AND THE WORLD WAR
ROBERT E. LEE, MAN AND SOLDIER
THE OLD DOMINION: HER MAKING AND HER MANNERS
THE OLD SOUTH
SOCIAL LIFE IN OLD VIRGINIA BEFORE THE WAR
THE NEGRO: THE SOUTHERNER'S PROBLEM
THE COAST OF BOHEMIA
"BEFO' DE WAR"
MARSE CHAN
MEH LADY
POLLY
UNC' EDINBURG
THE STRANGER'S PEW

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SANTA CLAUS'S PARTNER
AMONG THE CAMPS
TWO LITTLE CONFEDERATES
TOMMY TROT'S VISIT TO SANTA CLAUS
A CAPTURED SANTA CLAUS

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*Charles Scribner's Sons*

# ROBERT E. LEE

## MAN AND SOLDIER

BY

THOMAS NELSON PAGE

*Ω ξεῖν' ἀγγειλον Λακεδαιμονίοις ὅτι τῇδε*
*κείμεθα τοῖς κείνων ῥήμασι πειθόμενοι.*

WITH PORTRAIT AND MAPS

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1929

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1929

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TO THE MEMORY OF

"AS GALLANT AND BRAVE AN ARMY AS EVER EXISTED":

THE ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA:

ON WHOSE IMPERISHABLE DEEDS

AND INCOMPARABLE CONSTANCY

THE FAME OF THEIR OLD COMMANDER

WAS FOUNDED

# PREFACE

When this book was begun, I had in mind only to prepare a second and enlarged edition of the little volume published three years since, under the title "Robert E. Lee, the Southerner," in which the theme was Lee's personal character, and no attempt was made to present more than a bare outline of the military side of his life. With the materials in hand, however, and the attractiveness of the subject, the work soon expanded beyond the dimensions of a mere New Edition, and has finally assumed the proportions of a biography. The work has led into a field, new, at least to me, and besides a fuller account of the extraordinary conditions under which Lee conducted his military operations, I have endeavored to give his relation to the civil power of the Confederate Government.

Some repetition will be found, but the intention has been to give a clear outline of Lee's military career for those who may not care to go further into an account of battles, and then, for others, to give a history of Lee's military operations, which it is hoped may prove sufficiently complete to enable the interested reader to follow intelligently the masterly campaigns on which Lee's fame as a soldier is founded.

The authorities consulted in my studies cover a wide range of reports, histories, biographies, personal memoirs, and personal letters, to which I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness, especially to General Long's "Life of Lee," Dr. J. W. Jones' "Personal Reminiscences of Lee," General Fitzhugh Lee's "Lee," and Captain R. E. Lee's "Personal Recollections and Letters of General Lee."

I desire, however, to signalize certain authorities whose masterly studies have been found generally so accurate as to appear conclusive on the subjects of which they have treated. These are Mr. John C. Ropes' "Story of the Civil War," Colonel William Allan's "Army of Northern Virginia," Colonel G. F. R. Henderson's "Life of Stonewall Jackson," Major John Bigelow, Jr.'s, "Campaign of Chancellorsville" (the most complete and authoritative history of any battle ever fought on American soil), and finally, General A. A. Humphreys' "The Virginia Campaign of '64 and '65." These I have often followed closely and, though I have not always adopted their conclusions, I desire to record my indebtedness to them in the fullest possible way.

I further desire to make my acknowledgments to Colonel Hunter Liggett, Colonel Charles G. Treat, and the officers who accompanied them in the War College expedition of 1911 over the battle-fields of Virginia,

for their courtesy extended me during that expedition and for the great aid which I derived from their careful and thoughtful discussions of Lee's campaigns in Virginia. The historical spirit in which these soldiers have approached their subject is one I have endeavored to emulate, even though I may have done so vainly, and is the best assurance that in time a complete history of the great war will be written.

THOS. NELSON PAGE.

WASHINGTON,
*October*, 1911.

# CONTENTS


| CHAPTER | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| I. | Early Life | 3 |
| II. | First Service | 15 |
| III. | The Choice of Hercules | 36 |
| IV. | Resources | 67 |
| V. | Lee in West Virginia | 80 |
| VI. | The Situation When Lee Took Command | 122 |
| VII. | Battles Around Richmond | 145 |
| VIII. | Lee Relieves Richmond | 192 |
| IX. | Lee's Audacity—Antietam and Chancellorsville | 215 |
| X. | Fredericksburg | 249 |
| XI. | Chancellorsville | 264 |
| XII. | Lee's Audacity—Salem Church | 292 |
| XIII. | Gettysburg | 304 |
| XIV. | Autumn of 1863 | 364 |
| XV. | The Wilderness Campaign | 388 |
| XVI. | Spottsylvania Court House | 410 |
| XVII. | South Anna and Second Cold Harbor | 424 |
| XVIII. | Lee's Strategy and the First Attack on Petersburg | 444 |

CHAPTER PAGE

XIX. The Siege of Petersburg and Richmond . . . . . 467

XX. Lee and Grant . . . . . 488

XXI. The Last Ditch . . . . . 516

XXII. The Retreat to Appomattox . . . 545

XXIII. General Lee and the Confederate Government . . . . . 580

XXIV. Lee's Clemency . . . . . 617

XXV. Lee in Defeat . . . . . 636

XXVI. After the War . . . . . 642

XXVII. Lee as College President . . . . 660

XXVIII. Sources of Character . . . . . 684

Appendix A . . . . . 695
Lee's order for the battle of Gaines's Mill.

Appendix B . . . . . 698
Extracts from Letter to Author from General Marcus J. Wright.
Extract from Letter to Author from Colonel Thomas L. Livermore.

Appendix C . . . . . 703
Lee's Report of the Gettysburg Campaign.

Appendix D . . . . . 714
Extract from Letter to Author from Andrew R. Ellerson, Esq., of Ellerson's, Hanover County, Va.

Appendix E . . . . . 716
Report of the Surrender at Appomattox.

Index . . . . . 721

# INTRODUCTORY

This study of a great American is not written with the expectation or even with the hope that the writer can add anything to the fame of Lee; but rather in obedience to a feeling that as the son of a Confederate soldier, as a Southerner, as an American, he, as a writer, owes something to himself and to his countrymen which he should endeavor to pay, though it may be but a mite cast into the Treasury of Abundance.

The subject is not one to be dealt with in the language of eulogy. To attempt to decorate it with panegyric would but belittle it. What the writer proposes to say will be based upon public records; on the studies of those whose authority is unquestioned; or on the testimony of those personal witnesses who by character and opportunity for observation would be held to furnish evidence by which the gravest concerns of life would be decided.

At the outset I venture to quote the words of the Master of Historians, not to express my achievement, but my endeavor:

"With reference to the narrative of events, far from permitting myself to derive it from the first source that came to hand, I did not even trust my own impressions; but it rests partly on what I saw myself, partly on what others saw for me, the accu-

racy of the report being always tried by the most severe and detailed tests possible.

"My conclusions have cost me some labor from the want of coincidence between accounts of the same occurrences by different eye-witnesses, arising sometimes from imperfect memory, sometimes from undue partiality for one side or the other." [1]

True enough it is, Lee was assailed—and assailed with a rancor and persistence which have undoubtedly left their deep impression on the minds of a large section of his countrymen; but, as the years pass by, the passions and prejudices which attempted to destroy him have been gradually giving place to a juster conception of the lineaments of Truth.

Among his warmest admirers to-day are some who fought against him. No more appreciative study of him has been written than that by Mr. Charles Francis Adams, whose breadth, clearness of vision, and classic charm as a writer were only equalled by his gallantry in the Army of the Potomac, where he won his first laurels.

Unhappily, the world judges mainly by the measure of success, and though Time hath his revenges, and finally rights many wrongs, the man who fails of an immediate end appears to the body of his contemporaries, and often to the generations following, to be a failure. Yet from such seed as this have sprung the richest fruits of civilization. In the Divine Economy appears a wonderful mystery. Through all the history of sublime endeavor would seem to run the strange truth

[1] Thucydides' "History of The Peloponnesian War," chap. I.

enunciated by the Divine Master: that he who loses his life for the sake of the Truth shall find it.

But although, as was said by the eloquent Holcombe of Lee just after his death, "No calumny can ever darken his fame, for History has lighted up his image with her everlasting lamp," yet after forty years there still appears in certain quarters a tendency to rank General Lee, as a soldier, among those captains who failed. Some historians, looking with narrow vision at but one side, and many readers, ignorant of all the facts, honestly take this view. A general he was, they say, able enough for defence; but he was uniformly defeated when he took the offensive. He failed at Antietam; he was defeated at Gettysburg; he could not drive Grant out of Virginia; therefore he must be classed among captains of the second rank only.

Iteration and reiteration, to the ordinary observer, however honest he may be, gather accumulated force and oftentimes usurp the place of truth. The public has not time, nor does it care, to go deeper than the ordinary presentation of a case. It is possible, therefore, that unless the truth be set forth so plainly that it cannot be mistaken, this estimate of Lee as a captain may in time become established as the general, if not the universal, opinion of the public.

If, however, Lee's reputation becomes established as among the second class of captains, rather than as among the first, the responsibility for it will rest, not upon Northern writers, but upon the Southerners themselves. For the facts are plain.

We of the South have been wont to leave the writing of history mainly to others, and it is far from a complete excuse that whilst others were writing history we were making it. It is as much the duty of a people to disprove any charge blackening their fame as it is of an individual. Indeed, the injury is infinitely more far-reaching in the former case than in the latter.

Lee's character I deem absolutely the fruit of the Virginian civilization which existed in times past. No drop of blood alien to Virginia coursed in his veins; his rearing was wholly within her borders and according to the principles of her life.

Whatever of praise or censure, therefore, shall be his must fall fairly on his mother, Virginia, and the civilization which existed within her borders. The history of Lee is the history of the South during the greatest crisis of her existence. For with his history is bound up the history of the Army of Northern Virginia, on whose imperishable deeds and incomparable constancy rests his fame.

The reputation of the South has suffered because we have allowed rhetoric to usurp the place of history. We have furnished many orators, but few historians. But all history at last must be the work, not of the orator, but of the historian. Truth, simply stated, like chastity in a woman's face, is its own best advocate; its simplest presentation is its strongest proof.

# ROBERT E. LEE

## MAN AND SOLDIER

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"A Prince once said of a Monarch slain,
'Taller he seems in Death.'"

—Hope.

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY LIFE

On a plateau about a mile from the south bank of the Potomac River, in the old Colonial county of Westmoreland, in what used to be known as the "Northern Neck," that portion of Virginia which Charles II in his heedlessness once undertook to grant to his friends and favorites, Culpeper and Arlington, stands a massive brick mansion, one of the most impressive piles of brick on this continent. Built in the form of a broad H, it looks, even in its dilapidation, as though it might have been erected by Elizabeth and bombarded by Cromwell. It had to be built strong; for in those days the Indians were just across the blue mountains to the westward, and roving bands were likely to appear at any time, following the broad river in search of scalps or booty, and ready to fall on any defenceless family in their way. The broad chimneys clustered

above the roof of each wing are said to have been connected in old times by a pavilion which was used for dances and such like entertainments. No picture of the mansion gives any adequate idea of its château-like massiveness. It was built by Thomas Lee, grandson of Richard Lee, the immigrant, who came to Virginia about 1641–42, and founded a family which has numbered among its members as many men of distinction as any family in America. It was through him that Charles II, when an exile in Brussels, is said to have been offered an asylum and a kingdom in Virginia. When the first mansion erected was destroyed by fire, Queen Anne, in recognition of the services of her faithful counsellor in Virginia, sent over a liberal contribution toward its rebuilding. Founded about 1725–30, it bears the old English name, Stratford, after the English estate of Richard Lee, and for many generations, down to the last generation, it was the home of the Lees of Virginia.

This mansion has a unique distinction among historical houses in this country; for in one of its chambers were born two signers of the Declaration of Independence: Richard Henry Lee, who, in obedience to the mandate of the Virginia Convention, moved the resolution in Congress to declare the Colonies free and independent States, and Francis Lightfoot Lee, his brother. But it has a yet greater distinction. In one of its chambers was born, on the 19th of January, 1807, Robert E. Lee, whom many students of military history believe to have been not only the greatest soldier of his time, and, taking all things together, the great-

est captain of the English-speaking race, but the loftiest character of his generation; one rarely equalled, and possibly never excelled, in all the annals of the human race.

His reputation as a soldier has been dealt with by others much better fitted to speak of it than I; and in what I shall have to say as to this I shall often follow them, drawing from their studies what seem to me the necessary conclusions presented. The campaigns in which that reputation was achieved are now the studies of all military students throughout the world, quite as much as are the campaigns of Hannibal and Cæsar, of Cromwell and Marlborough, of Napoleon and Wellington.

"According to my notion of military history," says Field Marshal Viscount Wolseley, "there is as much instruction both in strategy and in tactics to be gleaned from General Lee's operations of 1862 as there is to be found in Napoleon's campaigns of 1796." In recognition of this fact the United States War College annually sends an expedition of picked officers to study the movements of these campaigns on the fields on which he gained his renown.

Robert Edward Lee was the fourth son of General Henry Lee, known in history as "Light Horse Harry" Lee (who in his youth had been the gallant young commander of the "Partisan Legion"), and the third son of Anne Carter, of Shirley, his second wife, a pious and gracious representative of the old Virginia family whose home still stands in simple dignity upon the banks of the James, and has been far-famed for gen-

erations as one of the best-known seats of the old Virginia hospitality. His three older brothers were Henry (who was the only child of "Light Horse Harry" Lee's first marriage), Charles Carter, and Sidney Smith, all of whom were unusually clever men. His two sisters were Mildred and Anne. In his veins flowed the best blood of the gentry of the Old Dominion, and, for that matter, of England, and surrounding him from his earliest childhood were the best traditions of the old Virginia life. Amid these, and these alone, he grew to manhood. On both sides of his house his ancestors for generations had been councillors and governors of Virginia, and had contributed their full share toward Virginia's greatness.

Richard Lee, "the immigrant," was a scion of an old family, ancient enough to have fought at Hastings and to have followed Richard of the Lion Heart to the Holy Land.[1] On this side of the water they had ever stood among the highest. The history of no two families was more indissolubly bound up with the history of Virginia than that of the Lees and the Carters. Thus, Lee was essentially the type of the cavalier of the Old Dominion, to whom she owed so much of her glory. Like Sir Walter Raleigh, he could number a hundred gentlemen among his kindred, and, even at his greatest, he was in character the type of his order.

In the youth of young Henry Lee, Princeton was the most popular of the colleges with the Virginians, and Henry Lee was a student at Princeton when the Revolutionary War broke out. Nearly all the young men

[1] "Lee of Virginia," by Edmund I. Lee.

of his age were deeply interested in the matters which brought on the war, and probably because of the leading part Virginia took in the movement for independence, and possibly because of the prominent part that his kinsmen took in Virginia, no sooner had war begun, with the battle of Lexington, than young Henry Lee left his studies and joined the army. He was commissioned a captain at the age of nineteen, and by his soldierly qualities soon became a marked man. He rendered such signal service in the early campaigns of the war, and showed such courage, ability and dash, that he early became a favorite with Washington, and, as was stated by his famous son long afterward, "in the difficult and critical operations in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York, from 1777 to 1780, inclusive, he was always placed near the enemy, intrusted with the command of outposts, the superintendence of scouts, and that kind of service which requires unusual qualities of resourcefulness and self-reliance." [1]

His activity and daring in scouting near the enemy drew their attention, and they set to work to capture him. Knowing that he was quartered about six miles below Valley Forge, a surprise was attempted by them. A body of two hundred horse set out one night, and having taken a roundabout route, they eluded his outposts and reached about daybreak the house where he was quartered. In the house were only eight men: Captain Lee, Lieutenant Lindsay, Major Gemieson, a corporal, and four men. Though surprised, the soldiers in the house, instead of surrendering as they were ex-

[1] "Memoirs of the War of '76," by H. Lee, p. 16.

pected to do, under Lee's direction barricaded the doors and fought the assailants off, forcing them finally to retire with a loss of five men killed and a number more wounded. Then, as they were attempting to carry off the horses of the party, Lee hurried the departure of the enemy by shouting to his men to fire away, as the infantry were coming, and they would bag them all. As soon as they retired he sallied forth, got his men to horse, and pursued the English force to their main body.

For this exploit, together with his services in the campaign before it, which Washington highly commended, Congress promoted Captain Lee to the rank of major, and gave him an independent command, known as a "partisan corps," composed first of two, and later of three troops of horse.

That summer he took part in the capture of Stony Point, which gave Mad Anthony Wayne his fame, and a little later he planned and executed the surprise and capture of Paulus Hook under the nose of the British warships and the garrisons of the New York forts. For this exploit Congress again signally honored him—thanking him publicly, and striking a medal in his honor, a tribute paid to no other officer below the rank of general during the war.[1]

When the chief seat of war was transferred to the South, toward the end of 1780, Major Lee moved to join the Southern army, opposing Cornwallis in South Carolina, and Congress in recognition of his distinguished services made him, on Washington's recommendation, a lieutenant-colonel. He took part in all the battles of

[1] Lee's "Memoirs of the War of '76," p. 23.

the Southern campaign, and rendered such service that, when broken in health and partly because disappointed of a reward which he thought due him he retired about February, 1782, General Greene wrote of him to the president of Congress in the following warm terms: "Lieutenant-Colonel Lee retired for a time for the recovery of his health. I am more indebted to this officer than to any other for the advantages gained over the enemy in the operations of the last campaign, and should be wanting in gratitude not to acknowledge the importance of his services, a detail of which is his best panegyric." [1]

Later on Colonel Lee became a member of Congress, and was so noted for his eloquence that when in 1799 Washington died, he was selected by Congress to deliver the official eulogy on his old commander and life-long friend. Subsequently he became the governor of Virginia, and served as such for three terms, and when the rebellion broke out in Pennsylvania, he was chosen to command the troops mobilized for its suppression. Thus, the blood that coursed through the veins of Robert E. Lee was that of a soldier.

It has been well said that knowledge of a man's ideals is the key to his character. Tell us his ideals and we can tell you what manner of man he is. Lee's ideal character was close at hand from his earliest boyhood. His earliest days were spent in a region filled with traditions of him who, having consecrated his life to duty, had with the fame of a great soldier attained such a standard of virtue that if we would

[1] Lee's "Memoirs of the War of '76," p. 41.

liken him to other governors we must go back to Marcus Aurelius, to St. Louis and to William the Silent.

Not far from Stratford, within an easy ride, in the same old colonial county of Westmoreland, on the bank of the noble river whose broad waters reflect the arching sky, spanning Virginia and Maryland, was Wakefield, the plantation which had the distinction of having given birth to the Father of his Country. Thus, on this neighborhood, the splendor of the evening of his noble life, just closed, had shed a peculiar glory. And not a great way off, in a neighboring county on the banks of the same river, was the home of his manhood, where in majestic simplicity his ashes repose, making Mount Vernon a shrine for lovers of liberty of every age and every clime.

On the wall at Shirley, Lee's mother's home, among the portraits of the Carters hangs a full-length portrait of Washington, in a general's uniform, given by him to General Nelson, who gave it to his daughter, Mrs. Carter. Thus, in both his ancestral homes the boy from his cradle found an atmosphere redolent at once of the greatness of Virginia's past and of the memory of the preserver of his country.

It was Lee's own father, the gallant and gifted "Light Horse Harry" Lee, who, as eloquent in debate as he had been eager in battle, having, as stated, been selected by Congress to deliver the memorial address on Washington, had coined the golden phrase which, reaching the heart of America, has become his epitaph and declared him by the unanimous voice of a grate-

ful people, "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

How passionately the memory of "Light Horse Harry" Lee was revered by his sons we know, not only from the life of Robert E. Lee, himself, but from that most caustic of American philippics, the "Observations on the Writings of Thomas Jefferson, with Particular Reference to the Attacks they contain on the Memory of the late General Henry Lee, in a series of Letters by Henry Lee of Virginia."

Mr. Jefferson, with all his prestige and genius, had found a match when he aroused "Black Harry" Lee by a charge of ingratitude on the part of his father to the adored Washington. In no family throughout Virginia was Washington's name more revered than among the Lees, who were bound to him by every tie of gratitude, of sentiment, and of devotion.

Thus, the impress of the character of Washington was natural on the plastic and serious mind of the thoughtful son of "Light Horse Harry."

One familiar with the life of Lee cannot help noting the strong resemblance of his character in its strength, its poise, its rounded completeness to that of Washington, or fail to mark what influence the life of Washington had on the life of Lee. The stamp appears upon it from his boyhood, and grows more plain as his years progress.

Just when the youth definitely set before himself the character of Washington we may not know; but it must have been at an early date. The famous story of the sturdy little lad and the cherry-tree must have

been well known to young Lee from his earliest boyhood, for it was floating about that region when Parson Weems came across it as a neighborhood tradition, and made it a part of our literature.[1] It has become the fashion to deride such anecdotes, but this much, at least, may be said of this story, that however it may rest solely on the authority of the simple, itinerant preacher, it is absolutely characteristic of Washington, and it is equally characteristic of him who since his time most nearly resembled him.

However this was, the lad grew up amid the traditions of that greatest of great men, whose life he so manifestly takes as his model, and with whose fame his own fame was to be so closely allied in the minds and hearts of the people of the South.

Like Washington, Robert E. Lee became an orphan at an early age, his father having been mortally injured in an election riot in Baltimore, and dying when the lad was only eleven years old, and, like Washington, Lee was brought up by a devoted mother, the gentle and pious Anne Carter, of Shirley, a representative, as already stated, of one of the old families of "Tidewater" Virginia, and a descendant of Robert Carter, known as "King Carter," equally because of his great possessions, his dominant character, and his high position in the colony. Through his mother, as through his father, Lee was related to most of the families of distinction in

[1] A Japanese officer, a military attaché at Washington, related to the writer that when he was a boy in a hill-town of Japan, where his father was an officer of one of the old Samurai, his mother told him the story of George Washington and the cherry-tree and tried to impress on him the lessons of truth.

the Old Dominion, and, by at least one strain of blood, to Washington himself.

Early in Lee's life his father and mother moved from Stratford to Alexandria, one of the two or three Virginia towns that were homes of the gentry, and his boyhood was passed in the old town that was redolent of the memory of Washington. He worshipped in old Christ Church, the same church in which Washington had been a pew-holder, and he was a frequent visitor both at the noble mansion on the banks of the Potomac where the Father of his Country had made his home and at that one where lived the Custises, the descendants and representatives of his adopted son, which was to become Lee's own home in the future.

Sprung from such stock and nurtured on such traditions, the lad soon gave evidence of the character that was to place him next to his model. Little is recorded of his childhood beyond the fact of his devotion to his mother and his sisters, and his attention to his duties. Both of his older brothers were very clever, and it is possible that the sturdy Robert was overshadowed by them. "Robert, who was always good," wrote his father of him from the West Indies, where he had gone hoping to restore his health after his injury, "will be confirmed in his happy turn of mind by his ever-watchful and affectionate mother." This prophecy was amply fulfilled. It is recorded that "his mother taught him in his childhood to practise self-denial and self-control, as well as the strictest economy in all financial concerns." To his mother he was ever a dutiful and devoted son, and we have a glimpse of

him, none the less interesting and significant because it is casual, leaving his playfellows at their sport to go and take his invalid mother driving in the old family carriage, where he was careful to fasten the curtains and close up the cracks with newspapers to keep the draughts from her, and using all his powers to entertain and divert her. The ties between them were ever peculiarly close, and more than one of his cousins have recorded that what impressed them most in their youth was "Robert's devotion to his mother." "You have been both son and daughter to me," wrote his mother, in her loneliness, after he had left home for West Point. "The other boys used to drink from the glasses of the gentlemen," said one of the family; "but Robert never would join them. He was different."

A light is thrown on his character at this time in a pleasant reference to his boyhood made by himself long afterward, in writing of his youngest son, then a lad, who was going to the Virginia Springs as escort to his mother and sister. "A young gentleman," he says, "who has read Virgil must surely be competent to take care of two ladies; for before I had advanced that far I was my mother's outdoor agent and confidential messenger." [1] He might readily have said more; for it is related that he was known from his boyhood for his devoted attention to his mother, and that "in her last illness he mixed every dose of medicine which she took," and nursed her both night and day.

[1] Letter of June 25, 1857.

## CHAPTER II

### FIRST SERVICE

YOUNG Lee selected at an early age the military profession, which had given his father and his great prototype their fame. During his early boyhood occurred the capture of Washington city and the destruction of the Capitol and the White House by the British troops, and it has been suggested that this may have turned his mind toward the army. But this was not needed. It was the profession to which all young men of spirit turned. It was in the blood. And young Lee was the son of him of whom General Charles Lee, himself an accomplished soldier, had said, that "he seemed to have come a soldier from his mother's womb," a bit of characterization which this soldier's distinguished son was to quote with filial satisfaction when, after he himself had become possibly the most famous soldier of his time, he wrote his father's biography. He was, wrote one of his cousins, "most anxious to go to West Point, both to relieve his mother and to have a military education." He had gone to school at the Alexandria Academy to a Mr. Leary, and with a view to preparing himself for West Point he now went for a time to the school of a well-known teacher, Mr. Hallowell. Here, according to his old master, he was

noted for his attention to his duties and his perfect recitations. "His specialty," adds the old teacher, "was finishing up," and he records that even the diagrams in conic sections which he drew on a slate were as carefully drawn and finished as if he had expected them to be engraved. At the proper time, 1825, when he was eighteen years of age, he was entered as a cadet among Virginia's representatives at the military academy of the country, having, it is said, received his appointment through Andrew Jackson, then a senator from Tennessee, to whom he applied in person. And there is a tradition that the hero of New Orleans was much impressed at the interview between them, with the frank and sturdy youth who applied for the appointment. At the academy, as in the case of young Bonaparte, those soldierly qualities which were to bring him later so great a measure of fame were apparent from the first; and he bore off the highest honor that a cadet can secure—the coveted cadet-adjutancy of the corps. Here, too, he gave evidence of the character that was to prove his most distinguished attribute, and he graduated second in his class of forty-six, but with the extraordinary distinction of not having received a demerit. Thus early his solid character manifested itself. "Even at West Point," says Holcombe, "the solid and lofty qualities of the young cadet were remarked on as bearing a resemblance to those of Washington."

The impress of his character was already becoming stamped upon his countenance. One who knew him about this time records that as she observed his face

in repose while he read to the assembled family circle, or sat in church, the reflection crossed her mind that he looked more like a great man than any one she had ever seen.

Among his classmates and fellow students at West Point were many of those men whom he was afterward to serve with or against in the great Civil War, and doubtless a part of his extraordinary success in that Homeric contest was due to the accurate gauge which he formed, in his youth or a little later in Mexico, of their abilities and character. Indeed, as may be shown, this was made almost plainly manifest in his dealings in at least three great campaigns of the war: that in which he confronted the over-prudent McClellan and defeated him, and those in which he balked and routed the vainglorious Pope and Hooker.

Here is a picture of him at this time from the pen of one who knew and loved him all his life, and had cause to know and love him as a true friend and faithful comrade—his old classmate and comrade-in-arms, Joseph E. Johnston. They had, as he states, entered the military academy together as classmates, and formed there a friendship never impaired, a friendship that was hereditary, as Johnston's father had served under Lee's father in the celebrated Lee Legion during the Revolutionary War.

"We had," says General Johnston, "the same intimate associates, who thought as I did, that no other youth or man so united the qualities that win warm friendship and command high respect. For he was full of sympathy and kindness, genial and fond of gay

conversation, and even of fun, while his correctness of demeanor and attention to all duties, personal and official, and a dignity as much a part of himself as the elegance of his person, gave him a superiority that every one acknowledged in his heart. He was the only one of all the men I have known that could laugh at the faults and follies of his friends in such a manner as to make them ashamed without touching their affection for him, and to confirm their respect and sense of his superiority." He mentions, as an instance of the depth of his sympathy, an occurrence which took place the morning after a battle in Mexico, in which he had lost a cherished young relative. Lee, meeting him and seeing the grief in his face, burst into tears and soothed him with a sympathy as tender, declared the veteran long years after, "as his lovely wife would have done."

Small wonder that the soldiers who followed Lee faced death with a devotion that was wellnigh without a parallel.

Still influenced in part, perhaps, by his worship for his great hero, the young officer chose as the partner of his life his old playmate, Miss Mary Parke Custis, the granddaughter of Washington's stepson, the surviving representative of Washington. It was an early love affair, and, as such usually resulted in Virginia, proved one of the happiest of marriages. The marriage ceremony took place in the old drawing-room at Arlington, on the 30th of June, 1831, and was performed by the Rev. Dr. William Meade, afterward bishop of Virginia. Mrs. Lee was the daughter and heiress of George W. Parke Custis, while Lieutenant

Lee was poor; but such was her pride in her husband, and her sense of what was his due, that on her marriage to him she determined to live on her husband's income as a lieutenant, and for some time she thus lived.[1] It was a fitting training for the hardships she was called on to face, when her husband, as commander-in-chief of the Confederate armies, deemed himself happy to be able to send her one nearly dried-up lemon. Their domestic life was one of ideal devotion and happiness. Should we seek through all the annals of time for an illustration of the best that exists in family life, we need not go further to find the perfection and refinement of elegance and of purity than that stately mansion, the home of Lee, which from the wooded heights of Arlington looks down upon the city of Washington, and has by a strange fate become the last resting-place of many of those whose chief renown has been that they fought bravely against Lee. Seven children were born to him, all of whom grew up, and two of whom, like their father, adopted the profession of arms, and rose to the distinguished rank of major-general in the Confederate army.

With the distinction of such a high graduation as his, young Lee was, of course, assigned to the Engineers, that corps of intellectual aristocracy from which came, with the notable exceptions of Grant and Jackson, nearly all the officers who attained high rank during the war. His first service was in Virginia, where he was engaged on sea-coast defences, an ex-

[1] This fact was stated to the writer by the wife of General William N. Pendleton, Mrs. Lee's close neighbor and friend.

perience which was to bear rich fruit later on when he was called to construct the coast defences of the Carolinas, and rendered them impregnable against attack by sea. He was stationed at Fortress Monroe when occurred in a neighboring county the bloody negro uprising known as the "Nat Turner Rebellion," which thrilled Virginia as thirty years later thrilled her the yet more perilous "John Brown Raid," which Lee was sent to quell, and quelled. Lee's letters to his wife touching this episode, while self-contained as was his wont, show the deep gravity with which he regarded this ferocious outbreak. Doubtless it also bore its part in bringing his mind to its definite conclusions against slavery, and his conviction that the presence of the colored race was an incalculable misfortune to a State. In 1834 he was assigned to service in Washington, as assistant to the chief engineer of the army. He was promoted to the rank of first lieutenant in 1836, and in 1838 was promoted to the rank of captain. During this service he resided at Arlington, and took his midday meal at a boarding-house kept by a Mrs. Ulrich, on the site of Riggs's Hotel, which was so popular with the army officers that it was known as "The Mess." Here he met many of the leading public men of the day, on all of whom he made a deep impression. "No one was ever jealous of him," records one of his old comrades, Colonel McComb; "all delighted to do him honor."

His early manhood was devoted with unremitting care to his profession, wherein he made, while still a young man, a reputation for ability of so high an order, and for such devotion to duty, that when the Missis-

sippi, owing to a gradual change in its banks, threatened the city of St. Louis, General Scott, having been appealed to to lend his aid to prevent so dire a calamity, said he knew of but one man who was equal to the task, Brevet Captain Lee. "He is young," he wrote, "but if the work can be done, he can do it." The city government, it is said, impatient at the young engineer's methodical way, withdrew the appropriation for the work; but he went on quietly, with the comment: "They can do as they like with their own, but I was sent here to do certain work, and I shall do it." And he did it. Feeling in the city ran high, riots broke out, and it is said that cannon were placed in position to fire on his working force; but he kept calmly on to the end. The work he wrought there stands to-day—the bulwark of the great city which has so recently invited America and the nations of the world within her gates. His service in 1837 in surveying the upper Mississippi and opening it so as to render it navigable is not generally known; yet it provided a clear water-way for the great region of the North-west, and opened it for the immigration which has since made it one of the most important sections of the country. And Lee's recommendations led to the great conception of the present system of improvement of internal water-ways, and his method was the forerunner of the Eads system of jetties, by which the Mississippi River has been preserved as the midland water-way of the nation.

Referring to this period, one of his old comrades, who later served against him, General Meigs, says of

him: "He was a man then in the vigor of youthful strength, with a noble and commanding presence, and an admirable, graceful, and athletic figure. He was one with whom nobody ever wished or ventured to take a liberty, though kind and generous to his subordinates, admired of all women, and respected of all men. He was the model of a soldier, and the beau ideal of a Christian man." Such is the picture of Robert E. Lee at the age of thirty, drawn by one who was arrayed against him in the fierce 'sixties, but who honored him throughout all.

In 1842 Lee was assigned to duty at Fort Hamilton, where for several years he was engaged in improving the defences of New York harbor. Two years later he was appointed on the Board of Visitors of the United States Military Academy, and his efficient services thereon prepared him for the position of superintendent of the Academy later on.

The Mexican War was the training ground of most of those who fought with distinction in the later and more terrible strife of the Civil War, and many of the greatest campaigns and fiercest battles of that war were planned and fought with a science learned upon the pampas and amid the mountains of Mexico. Lee, Jackson, Davis, Johnston, Beauregard, McClellan, Grant, Thomas, Sumner, all won their spurs in Mexico. During the Mexican War, Lee, starting in as an engineer officer on the staff of General Wool, achieved more renown than any other soldier of his rank, and possibly more than any other officer in the army of invasion except the commander-in-chief. He became General Scott's

chief of staff, and between the two was cemented a friendship which even the Civil War could not destroy.

Without going fully into the details of his distinguished services there, which kept him ever at the crucial point, it may be said that they led General Scott to declare, long afterward, that he was the "very best soldier he ever saw in the field." His scouts and reconnoissances at Cerro Gordo, Contreras, Churubusco, and Chapultepec brought him the brevets of major at Cerro Gordo, April 18, 1847, of lieutenant-colonel at Contreras and Churubusco, and of colonel at Chapultepec, September 13. His first marked distinction was won by a reconnoissance made at night with a single guide, a Mexican, whom he compelled to serve at the muzzle of the pistol, wherein he ascertained the falsity of a report that Santa Anna's army had crossed the mountains and lay in their front. Their tents, it was said, whitened the mountain side. He galloped forward alone into the hills, and discovered that the white tents were flocks of sheep. This distinction greatly increased that which he had already won by work at Vera Cruz, by which that strategic point, protected, as it was believed, by impregnable defences, was captured. Here on the landing of General Scott's army on the 9th of March, Lee was placed in charge of the establishment of batteries and other details of the siege, and was "favorably mentioned" by the commanding general for his valuable services. Lee himself related his anxiety for his brother, who commanded a detachment of seamen in the trenches, and his relief at seeing his white teeth shining through the

smoke. But this, as notable as it was, was as far excelled by his services at Cerro Gordo as that was in turn by his work at Contreras. At Cerro Gordo, where Santa Anna with 13,000 troops and 42 guns, posted in a pass, barred the way in an apparently impregnable position, Lee discovered a mountain pass, and having in person led Twigg's division to the point for assault in front, and having worked all night posting batteries, at dawn next morning led Riley's brigade up the mountains in the turning movement, which forced Santa Anna from his stronghold. At Contreras again he showed the divinely given endowments on which his future fame was to rest.

At Contreras the army of invasion found itself in danger of being balked almost at the gates of the capital, and Lee's ability shone forth even more brilliantly than at Cerro Gordo. The defences of the city of Mexico on the eastward appeared impregnable, while an attack from the south, where the approach was by nature of the ground less difficult, was rendered apparently almost as impossible by powerful batteries constructed at San Antonio Hill, commanding the only avenue of approach—the road which wound between Lake Chalco, with its deep morass on one side and impassable lava beds on the other. Lee, by careful reconnoissance, discovered a mule-trail over the Pedregal, as this wild and broken tract of petrified lava was termed, and this trail having been opened sufficiently to admit of the passage of troops, though with difficulty and danger, he conducted over it the commands of Generals Pillow and Worth, and the village

of Contreras was seized and held till night against all assaults of the enemy. The position of the American troops, however, was one of extreme peril, as it was known that heavy reinforcements were being rushed forward by the Mexicans, and at a council of war it was decided to advance before dawn rather than await attack from the Mexican forces. It became necessary to inform General Scott of the situation, and Captain Lee volunteered for the perilous service. He accordingly set out in the darkness and alone, and in the midst of a furious tropical storm he made his way back across the lava beds infested by bands of Mexicans, advised the commander-in-chief of the proposed movement, and having secured his co-operation, returned across the Pedregal in time to assist in the assault, which forced the Mexicans to abandon their position and opened the way to Churubusco, Molino del Rey, and Chapultepec, and finally led to the occupation of the capital and the close of the war. General Scott, in his report, stated that seven officers had been sent by him on this reconnoissance, but all returned, and that Lee was the only man who got through.

This act of Lee's was, declared Scott, "the greatest feat of physical and moral courage performed by any individual, to my knowledge, pending the campaign."

The story is well known of his devotion to duty while in Mexico. On one occasion, after the capture of the city, the officers gave a banquet, and when Lee did not appear, Magruder sought him, and found him hard at work on a map which he conceived it his duty

to prepare without delay. If he was, as Scott declared him, "as daring as laborious," also he was "as laborious as daring."

The "gallantry and good conduct," the "invaluable services," "the intrepid coolness and gallantry of Captain Lee of the Engineers," of "Captain Lee, so constantly distinguished," are in all the despatches of all the battles of the war, and Lee came out of this war with such a reputation for ability that his old commander, Scott, declared to General Preston, that he was "the greatest living soldier in America." Indeed, Scott, with prescient vision, declared his opinion that he was "the greatest soldier now living in the world." "If I were on my death-bed to-morrow," he said to General Preston, long before the breaking out of the war, "and the President of the United States should tell me that a great battle was to be fought for the liberty or slavery of the country, and asked my judgment as to the ability of a commander, I would say with my dying breath, 'Let it be Robert E. Lee.' "

To Reverdy Johnson, Scott said that his success in Mexico "was largely due to the skill, valor, and undaunted energy of Robert E. Lee." Lee himself, however, declared that it was General Scott's stout heart and military skill which overcame all obstacles, and, while others croaked, pushed the campaign through to final success. The delay in negotiating the treaty of peace after the fall of the city of Mexico seems to have irked him, and he writes privately: "I might make a rough diplomatist, but a tolerable quick one." Soon after the capture of the Mexican capital, he, with

characteristic modesty, wrote the following letter in reply to a letter from his wife's father, Mr. Custis, who had shown concern lest he should not be properly advanced on the close of hostilities.

City of Mexico, *April* 8, 1848.

. . . I hope my friends will give themselves no annoyance on my account, or any concern about the distribution of favors. I know how those things are awarded at Washington, and how the President will be besieged by clamorous claimants. I do not wish to be among them. Such as he can conscientiously bestow, I shall gratefully receive, and have no doubt that those will exceed my deserts. . . .

Certain it is that Lee came out of the Mexican War with more distinction than any other subordinate officer. And it was the opinion of his comrades that "all the compliments won by him were deserved." That "he was active, untiring, skilful, courageous, and of good judgment" is the verdict they gave. One other characteristic of his is mentioned by an old comrade. "He was conspicuous . . . for never having uttered a word among his most intimate associates that might not have been spoken in the presence of the most refined woman."

The scope of this volume does not admit of a detailed account of the years that intervened between the close of the Mexican War and the outbreak of the great Civil War, although it was in these years of devotion to duty, often in the form of dull routine, that Lee's powers reached their maturity.

During the period following the Mexican War Lee was engaged for a time in constructing the defences of Baltimore. Then he was, in 1852, assigned to duty as superintendent of the United States Military Academy at West Point, where he was to come to know and gauge many of the young officers who, a decade later, fought under or against him. Three years later he was assigned to active duty on the south-western frontier as lieutenant-colonel of one of the two regiments of cavalry which Mr. Jefferson Davis, then Secretary of War, had organized on the recommendation of General Scott, and made a separate branch of the service.[1] To the Second Cavalry was assigned the duty of guarding the south-western frontier and preventing or punishing the depredations of the Indians, and Lee applied himself to this work with characteristic zeal and patience. He speaks of the Indians' expeditions as "a cloak to cover all their thefts and murders," and thinks "the poor creatures" are "not worth the trouble they give to man and horse." He soon rose to the rank of colonel of cavalry, a position which a great critic of war has asserted to be the best of all training-schools for a great captain, and he held this rank when, having been brought to Washington to revise the tactics of the army, he was unexpectedly called on in the summer of 1859 to take charge of the force of marines sent to Harper's Ferry to capture John Brown and his followers in their crazy and murder-

[1] Of these regiments E. V. Sumner was colonel of the first and Joseph E. Johnston was lieutenant-colonel, and Albert Sidney Johnston was colonel of the second, with Lee as his lieutenant-colonel.

ous invasion of Virginia, with the design of starting a servile war which should lead to the negroes achieving their emancipation. This duty he performed promptly and efficiently. It was a delicate position. Virginia was in a tumult of rage and excitement over the bold attempt to arouse within her borders a servile insurrection, which meant putting her women and children to the sword. It was an armed invasion, and the respective claims of authority had to be recognized. There was grave danger of a conflict of authority between the State and the Federal powers. He met the situation with promptitude and wisdom. The murderous fanatic, Brown, was captured after a brief resistance, and was duly tried and executed by the civil authorities. It is an interesting fact that Lee's aide on this occasion was a young lieutenant, J. E. B. Stuart, who a few years later was to become his cavalry commander and achieve at a bound a world-wide fame. It is also an interesting fact that at this time he had one of his aides make a map for him of Harper's Ferry and the Maryland Heights opposite.

Though a strict disciplinarian, he was greatly admired by his men. Long afterward, when he was a defeated general on parole, without means, his every act and word watched by enemies thirsting for his blood, one of the men he had commanded in the Second Cavalry, but who had fought in the Union army throughout the war, called at his house in Richmond with a basket of provisions for his old commander, having heard that he was in want, and when he saw

him he seized him in his arms and kissed him. Of this regiment, Long speaks with pride: "As a proof of the superiority of its officers," he states, "it may be said that this regiment turned out during the war more distinguished men than any other regiment in the army. Besides Johnston, Lee, Hardee, and Thomas, it furnished Van Dorn, Palmer, Hood, Fitz Lee, Stoneman, Kirby Smith, Field, and others."

A light is thrown on his character in the letters he wrote about and to his children during his long absences from home on duty in Mexico and in the West. And it is one of the pathetic elements in the history of this loving and tender father that, with a nature which would have revelled in the joys of domestic life, he should have been called by duty to spend so large a part of his time away from home that on his return he did not know his own child.

In October, 1857, on the death of his wife's father, he came to Arlington to settle up his estate, and it is said that on his next visit to Virginia, about the time of the John Brown Raid, he was enjoying the second leave of absence that he had had since joining the service, over thirty years before. It was a delightful respite from the exactions of army life on the frontier. He was ever devoted to children, and amid the most tragic scenes of his eventful life his love for them speaks from his letters. Writing to his wife from St. Louis in 1837, when he was engaged in engineering work for the government, he speaks with deep feeling of the sadness he felt at being separated from his family, and of his anxiety about the training of his little son. "Our dear

little boy," he says, "seems to have among his friends the reputation of being hard to manage—a distinction not at all desirable, as it indicates self-will and obstinacy. Perhaps these are qualities which he really possesses, and he may have a better right to them than I am willing to acknowledge; but it is our duty, if possible, to counteract them, and assist him to bring them under his control. I have endeavored, in my intercourse with him, to require nothing but what was, in my opinion, necessary or proper, and to explain to him temperately its propriety, and at a time when he could listen to my arguments, and not at the moment of his being vexed and his little faculties warped by passion. I have also tried to show him that I was firm in my demands and constant in their enforcement, and that he must comply with them, and I let him see that I look to their execution in order to relieve him as much as possible from the temptation to break them."

Wise words from a father, and the significant thing was that they represented his conduct throughout his life. He was the personification of reasonableness. Small wonder that his youngest son, in his memoir of his father, recorded that among his first impressions was the recognition of a difference between his father and other persons, and a knowledge that he had to be obeyed. It was an impression which was later made on all who came in contact with him. A glimpse of him is given in an incident which he related of a walk in the snow with his eldest son when the latter was a child. The little boy had fallen behind, and his father, looking back over his shoulder, found him trying to

follow his stride and place his feet precisely in his footprints. "When I saw this," he said, "I felt that it behooved me to walk very straight, when this fellow is already following in my tracks." "To be alone in a crowd is to be very solitary," he writes to his wife, in another letter. "In the woods I feel sympathy with the trees and birds, in whose company I take delight; but experience no interest in a strange crowd." A touch in one of his letters to an old friend and classmate, then Lieutenant, afterward Lieutenant-General, Joseph E. Johnston, gives a glimpse of his love for children and also of that of another old friend: "He complains bitterly of his present waste of life, looks thin and dispirited, and is acquainted with the cry of every child in Iowa."

His son and namesake, in his "Recollections" of his father, makes mention of many little instances of his love of and care for animals, and the same love of and care for animals constantly shine from his letters.

At one time he picks up a dog lost and swimming wildly in "the Narrows," and cared for it through life; at another he takes a long, roundabout journey by steamer for the sake of his horse; at another he writes: "Cannot you cure poor 'Spec'?" (his dog). "Cheer him up! take him to walk with you—tell the children to cheer him up." In fact, his love for animals, like his love for children, was a marked characteristic throughout his life, and long after the war he took the trouble to write a description of his horse "Traveller," which none but a true lover of horses could have written.

On his return from Mexico, after an absence so long that he failed to recognize his own child whom he had left a babe in arms, he was, like Ulysses, first recognized by his faithful dog.[1]

His thoughts were constantly with his children—even amid the most arduous duties and the most perilous scenes his mind reverted to them. His letters from Mexico were full of them. On Christmas Eve he, in his imagination, filled their stockings, as on another occasion, in lieu of his own children, from whom he was far distant, he acted Santa Claus and bought presents for all the children in the post. And it has been noted "how little of war and how much of Christian feeling and domestic affection" his home letters contain. He ever kept in touch with his children, writing them of the interesting scenes through which he passed. To his eldest son, then a school-boy, later a gallant and efficient soldier of high rank, he wrote, just after the battle of Cerro Gordo,[2] how in the battle he had wondered, while the musket balls and grape were whistling over his head in a perfect shower, where he could have put him, if with him, to be safe. Indeed, all through his life children had a charm for him, known only to the starved heart of a father exiled from his own fireside and little ones. To the day of his death the entrance of a child was a signal for the dignified soldier to unbend, and among his most cherished companions in his retirement, when he was, perhaps, the most noted captain in the world, were the little sun-bonneted

[1] "Recollections and Letters of General Lee," by R. E. Lee.
[2] Letter of April 25, 1847.

daughters of the professors of the college of which he was the president.

His two elder sons had both entered the military profession, which their father held in the highest honor, and the letters he wrote them illustrated not only the charming relation that existed between father and sons, but the lofty ideal on which he ever modelled his own life and desired that they should model theirs. To his oldest son, then a cadet at West Point, he writes from Arlington (April 5, 1852), as he was on the point of leaving for New Mexico to see that his "fine old regiment," which had been "ordered to that distant region," was "properly cared for": ". . . Your letters breathe a true spirit of frankness; they have given myself and your mother great pleasure. You must study to be frank with the world. Frankness is the child of honesty and courage. . . . Never do a wrong thing to make a friend or to keep one. . . . Above all, do not appear to others what you are not. . . . In regard to duty, let me in conclusion of this hasty letter inform you that nearly a hundred years ago there was a day of remarkable darkness and gloom, still known as the dark day—a day when the light of the sun was slowly extinguished, as if by an eclipse. The legislature of Connecticut was in session, and as its members saw the unexpected and unaccountable darkness coming on, they shared the general awe and terror. It was supposed by many that the last day—the day of judgment—had come. Some one in consternation of the hour moved an adjournment. Then there arose an old Pilgrim legislator, Davenport of Stamford, and said

that if the last day had come he desired to be found at his place doing his duty, and therefore moved that candles be brought in so that the House could proceed with its duty. There was quietness in that man's mind, the quietness of heavenly wisdom and inflexible willingness to obey present duty. Duty, then, is the sublimest word in our language. Do your duty in all things, like the old Puritan. You cannot do more; you should never wish to do less. Never let me or your mother wear one gray hair for lack of duty on your part." [1]

Such, in brief, was Colonel Robert E. Lee, when at the age of fifty-four he found the storm of Civil War about to break on the country.

[1] It is said that this letter as a whole was made up by a clever newspaper man out of parts of different letters by Lee.

## CHAPTER III

### THE CHOICE OF HERCULES

When the war came Lee had to face the most momentous question that ever confronted a soldier. The government of the United States and his own State, which was later to form a part of a new national government, were about to be arrayed in arms against each other. The former was preparing to invade his native State, to coerce by arms the seceded States. He had to decide between allegiance to the general government, of which hitherto Virginia had formed a constituent part, whose commission he had borne, whose honors had been conferred on him, and under whose flag he had won high distinction, and allegiance to his native State, which, on being called on to take part against the South or be herself invaded, now in the exercise of her constitutional right seceded from the Union.

The John Brown Raid with its aim, the heading of a servile insurrection throughout the South, backed as it was by blind enthusiasts at the North, affected profoundly all thinking men at the South. Had it proved successful, the horrors of San Domingo would have been multiplied a thousandfold, and have swept over the South in a deluge of blood. The South was en-

raged by this effort to arouse a slave insurrection; but the wild sympathy expressed at the North with its murderous leader gave it a shock from which it never recovered. Lee had no illusions respecting slavery. He saw its evils with an eye as clear as Wendell Phillips's. He set forth his views in favor of emancipation in as positive terms as Lincoln ever employed. He set free before the war all the slaves he owned in his own right,[1] and, by a singular coincidence, within a week after the emancipation proclamation he manumitted all the negroes received by him from the Custis estate, having previous to that time made his arrangements to do so in conformity with the provisions of Mr. Custis's will.

In addition to his attitude toward slavery, as shown in his letting his own slaves go long before the war, his views on the subject occasionally appear in his letters. "I have always observed," he writes, "that wherever you find the negro, you see everything going down around him, and wherever you find the white man, you see everything around him improving." And again: "In this enlightened age there are few, I believe, but will acknowledge that slavery as an institution is a moral and a political evil in any country."

But he held the views that many if not most of the old Virginians held: he esteemed "the relation of master and slave, controlled by humane laws and influenced by Christianity and an enlightened public

[1] The authority for this is a letter from General G. W. C. Lee, in the writer's possession, in which he states that General Lee "let his slaves go," and one or more of them went to Liberia. The term as representing the liberation of slaves is as old as the mission of Moses.

sentiment, as the best that can exist between the white and black races while intermingled, as at present, in this country."

He stated after the war that "the best men of the South have long desired to do away with the institution, and were quite willing to see it abolished. But with them in relation to this subject the question has ever been: What will you do with the freed people? That is the serious question to-day. Unless some humane course, based upon wisdom and Christian principles, is adopted, you do them a great injustice in setting them free."

Most men of open minds have long passed the point when we should deny to any honorable man the right to make the election which Lee was called on to make on the secession of Virginia, as his conscience dictated. But with most of us sympathy and affection go to the man who chose the weaker side. This choice Lee deliberately made. Who knows what agony that accomplished soldier and noble gentleman went through during those long weeks, when the sword was suspended, and he with unblinded vision foresaw that it must fall! He was a devoted Union man. His letters all show the depth of his feeling for the Union his forefathers had contributed so largely to make. To some men the decision might have been made more difficult by the lure that was suddenly held out to him. But not so with Lee. The only question with him was what was his duty.

The President of the United States tendered to him the command of the armies of the Union about to take

the field. This has long been regarded by those who know as an established fact; but it has become the custom of late among a certain class to deny the fact on the principle, perhaps, that an untruth well stuck to may possibly supplant the truth. Of the fact that he was offered the command of the armies of the United States there is, however, abundant proof, outside of General Lee's own statement to Senator Reverdy Johnson, were more proof needed. The Hon. Montgomery Blair published the fact as stated by his father, the Hon. Francis P. Blair, that he had been sent by Mr. Lincoln to Colonel Lee with the offer of the command, and long afterward the Hon. Simon Cameron, formerly Secretary of War in Mr. Lincoln's cabinet, in a published interview, frankly admitted the fact. "It is true," he says, "that General Robert E. Lee was tendered the command of the Union army. It was the wish of Mr. Lincoln's administration that as many as possible of the Southern officers then in the regular army should remain true to the nation which had educated them. Robert E. Lee and Joseph E. Johnston were then the leading Southern soldiers. . . . In the moves and counter moves in the game of war and peace then going on, Francis P. Blair, Sr., was a prominent figure. The tender of the command of the United States forces was made to General Lee through him. Mr. Blair came to me expressing the opinion that General Lee could be held to our cause by the offer of the chief command of our forces. I authorized Mr. Blair to make the offer. . . ." [1]

[1] *New York Herald*, cited in Jones's "Lee," p. 130.

But the matter is set at rest by a letter from General Lee—his letter of February 25, 1868, to Hon. Reverdy Johnson—in which he states that he had a conversation with Mr. Francis Preston Blair, at his invitation, and, as he understood, at the instance of President Lincoln. "After listening to his remarks," he says, "I declined the offer he made me to take command of the army that was to be brought into the field, stating as candidly and as courteously as I could that, though opposed to secession and deprecating war, I could take no part in an invasion of the Southern States. I went directly from the interview with Mr. Blair to the office of General Scott, told him of the proposition that had been made me and my decision." [1] Indeed, it was this offer which possibly hastened his decision. Events were moving with startling and unexampled celerity. On April 12 Fort Sumter was fired on; on April 13 President Lincoln called on the unseceded States for troops; on April 17 Virginia, hitherto stanch for the Union, seceded. This action, in Lee's judgment, concluded her sons.

Three days later, on April 20, he resigned his commission in the United States army, declaring that he never wished to draw his sword again save in defence of his native State. Even then he "hoped that peace might be preserved and some way found to save the country from the calamities of war."

So much we have from his own lips, and that is proof enough for those who know his character.

This action of Lee's at the outbreak of the war, in

[1] See also Jones's "Life and Letters of Robert Edward Lee," p. 128.

resigning from the army of the United States, and later in assuming the command, first of the Virginian forces and afterward of the Confederate forces, used, during the period of passion covered by the war and the bitter years which followed, to be made the basis of a criticism whose rancor bore an almost precise relation to the degree of security which had been sought by the assailant during the hour of danger. The men who fought the battles of the Union said little upon the subject. They knew, for the most part, the lofty feeling which animated the breasts which opposed them, and paid it the tribute of unfeigned respect. The conduct of Grant and of his officers at Appomattox, with a single exception, was such as to reflect unending credit on them as men of honor and generosity. The charge of treason was mainly left to those who, having risked nothing on the field of honor, were fain later, when all danger was past, to achieve a reputation for patriotism by the unappeasable fury of their cries for revenge. To these, the vultures of the race, may be added an element, sincere and not well informed, who, more than half wishing to avail themselves of Lee's transcendent character, have found his action in this crisis a stumbling-block in their way. Having been reared solely upon the doctrine of Federalism, and taught all their lives that the officers of the army of the Union had received their education at West Point at the hands of the National Government, and were guilty of something like treason, or, as it used to be put, treachery, in giving up their commands in the Union army and bearing arms for their States against the United States,

they find it difficult to accept the plainest facts. These are the bigots of politics.

As the statement is absolutely unfounded, and as the matter goes to the basis of character, it is well to point these latter to the facts which disprove wholly and forever the premises on which they have based their erroneous conclusion.

It should be remembered at the outset that the action of every man must be considered in relation to the conditions from which that action springs, and amid which it had its being. The most fallacious method of considering history is that which excludes contemporary conditions and undertakes to judge it by the present, the two eras being often far more different than would be indicated by the mere passage of time.

At the time when Lee and his brother officers received their education at the Military Academy, they were sent there as State cadets, and the expense of their education was borne at last by the several States, which, there being at that time no high tariff and no internal-revenue taxation to maintain the National Government, made a yet more direct contribution than since the war to the government for its expenses. In recognition of this fact, and as compensation for the contribution by the States, each representative of a State had the right to send a cadet to each academy. Virginia had been peculiarly instrumental in creating the Union. She had taken a foremost and decisive part in the Revolution for those rights on which the Constitution was based, and subsequently in the adoption of the Con-

stitution. She had led alike in the field and in the council chamber. Without her no Union would have been formed, and without her no Union could have been preserved during the early decades of its existence. To make the Union possible she had ceded her vast north-west territory, to which she had the double claim that it was first embraced in her charter and later was conquered by her sons, led by George Rogers Clark. It may be safely predicated that had any one imagined that entering into the Union would have given the Union government the right to demand service against his State, there would never have been a Union.

There had long been two different schools of governmental thought in the country, the one representing the Federalist party and the other representing the Republican or Democratic party. They had their rise in the very inception of the National Government. Their teachings had divided the country from the first. Originally the chief agitation against the Federal Government had been at the North, and while the parties were not demarked by any sectional lines, for the most part, the body of the Federalist party were at the period of the outbreak of war, owing to certain conditions connected with the institution of slavery, and to various advantages accruing to the Northern States, as manufacturing States, at the North, while the body of the States' Rights party were at the South. Not only were the powers of the greatest statesmen and debaters in the country continually exercised upon this question, as, for example, in the debates in which Clay, Webster, Hayne, and Calhoun

took part on the floor of the Senate, but the teachings in the great institutions of learning were divided.[1] It was a question on which not only men divided, but populations; and the populations of the North and the South had largely exchanged places regarding it.

But Lee had from his boyhood been reared in the Southern school of States' Rights as interpreted by the conservative statesmen of Virginia. His gallant and distinguished father had been three times governor of Virginia, and while heartily advocating in the Virginia convention the ratification of the Constitution of the United States, favored the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions of 1798–99, drawn by Mr. Madison and Mr. Jefferson, which were based upon the States' Rights doctrine. He said in debate: "Virginia is my country: her will I obey, however lamentable the fate to which it may subject me."

He wrote to Mr. Madison in January, 1792, a letter in which he said: "No consideration on earth could induce me to act a part, however gratifying to me, which could be construed into disregard of, or faithlessness to, this commonwealth."

Such was the teaching under which Robert E. Lee had been reared. One knows little of Virginia who does not know with what passionate esteem the traditions and opinions of a father were cherished by a son. Political views were as much inherited as religious tenets.

The doctrine that made it treason for a State to secede is of modern origin. A question might exist

[1] A brief and simple statement of the position of the two sides may be found in Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," I, chap. I.

as to the propriety or wisdom of secession; but it was novel to question its right, and when it had seceded few men questioned that it carried with it the allegiance of its citizens.

As a matter of fact, at the time that young Lee was attending the Military Academy at West Point, the text-books, such as "Rawle's View of the Constitution," which were used there, taught with great distinctness the absolute right of a State to secede, and the primary duty of every man to his native State.[1] "It depends on the State itself," declares this authority then taught at West Point, "to retain or abolish the principle of representation, because it depends on itself whether it will continue a member of the Union. To deny this right would be inconsistent with the principle on which all our political systems are founded, which is, that the people have, in all cases, a right to determine how they will be governed. This right must be considered as an ingredient in the composition of the general government, which, though not expressed, was mutually understood, and the doctrine heretofore presented to the reader in regard to the indefeasible nature of personal allegiance is so far qualified in re-

[1] This has been ably and conclusively shown by Mr. Charles Francis Adams, of Massachusetts, in his admirable address on "Constitutional Ethics," and in his memorial address on the life and character of Robert E. Lee, delivered at Washington and Lee University on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of General Lee's birth. His distinguished grandfather, John Quincy Adams, who had been President of the United States, had enunciated the doctrine of secession clearly, declaring that it would be better for the States to "part in friendship from each other than to be held together by constraint" and "to form again a more perfect Union by dissolving that which could not bind." (Speech of John Quincy Adams, April 30, 1839.)

spect to allegiance to the United States." "It was observed that it was competent for a State to make a compact with its citizens, that the reciprocal obligation of protection and allegiance might cease on certain events; and it was further observed that allegiance would necessarily cease on the dissolution of the society to which it was due." This position was that held by the leaders of New England during the first half of the century, and was earnestly advanced by them both at the time of the acquisition of Louisiana and of Texas.

The action of the Hartford convention in threatening secession had blazoned abroad the views of the leaders of New England thought at the time when the Virginians were straining every force to maintain the Union, and John Quincy Adams had presented to Congress (January 23, 1842) a petition from a Massachusetts town (Haverhill), asking the dissolution of the Union, on which a motion had been made by a Virginia member (Mr. Gilmer) to censure him, which had been debated for ten days, Mr. Adams ably defending himself.

As has been stated, however, whatever question existed as to the right of a State to secede, there was no question at the time as to her citizens being bound by her action should she secede. The basic principle of the Anglo-Saxon civilization was the defence of the inner circle against whatever assailed it from the outside, and nowhere was this principle more absolutely established than in Virginia.

In order for those who do not know the facts to un-

derstand fully Lee's decision, it should be explained that Virginia did not make war on the Union, but the Union made war on the South and on Virginia. It has usually been accepted as an established fact that the war began by the firing on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861. Such was not the fact. The bombardment of this key to the Charleston harbor was not even the first instance of "firing on the flag," as it is usually assumed to have been. Three months before this the United States transport, *Star of the West*, was fired on and driven back as she was proceeding to revictual Sumter.

But prior to this the United States Government had been actually engaged in acts of war against the seceded States. Troops were being levied and equipped and a relief squadron of war had been fitted out and despatched for the avowed purpose of relieving and rendering impregnable the forts commanding Charleston harbor. These were acts of war, recognized as such by all authorities on this subject save those who have held a brief for the Union side in this particular struggle. When Virginia refused to join the secession movement and attempted to intervene as a peacemaker, the only reply she received was a peremptory demand to furnish her quota of troops for the war. Her answer to this was her ordinance of secession and her preparation for defence. But even then she took no hostile steps against the North. She only prepared to defend her borders. Whatever historians have written and others have thought, war was made on her, and the first shot fired by her within her confines or by her orders was in repelling armed

invasion. In such a case her whole people, save those in her mountain region, united under her banner with its noble legend: Sic semper tyrannis. In a thoughtful discussion of the action of Virginia at this time, Colonel G. F. R. Henderson, the noted biographer of Stonewall Jackson, says: "There can be no question but that secession was revolution, and revolutions, as has been well said, are not made for the sake of 'greased cartridges.' . . . Secession, in fact, was a protest against mob rule. . . . It is always difficult to analyze the motives of those by whom revolution is provoked; but if a whole people acquiesce, it is a certain proof of the existence of universal apprehension and deep-rooted discontent. This spirit of self-sacrifice which animated the Confederate South has been characteristic of every revolution which has been the expression of a nation's wrongs, but it has never yet accompanied mere factious insurrection. When, in the process of time, the history of secession comes to be viewed with the same freedom from prejudice as the history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it will be clear that the fourth great revolution of the English-speaking race differs in no essential characteristic from those that preceded it. . . . In each a great principle was at stake: in 1642, the liberty of the subject; in 1688, the integrity of the Protestant faith; in 1775, taxation only with consent of the taxed; in 1861, the sovereignty of the individual States." [1]

[1] Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson," new impression, I, pp. 93, 94. I have quoted extensively in this volume from this author, feeling that he, as an impartial student of the Civil War and its causes, is an authority to command respect.

Whether, then, those who were in the service of the United States at the outbreak of the war were under obligation to remain in her service after their States seceded, or were under obligation to resign and espouse the side of their several States, was a matter for each man to decide according to his conscience, and scores of gallant and high-minded gentlemen thus decided. Of the three hundred and odd graduates of West Point who were from the South, a considerable majority followed their States, and these—men whose character would challenge comparison with the loftiest examples of the human race. That there was an obligation on them to remain and bear arms against their family and people because of the source from which their education came is sheer nonsense. Had it ever been imagined that training at West Point bound a man to serve against his family and people in his native State, there would have been no West Point Military Academy. This education was but a simple return for the money contributed by their States to the general government. And Virginia had paid for all she got a hundred times over.

Without undertaking to enter upon anything like a complete discussion of this question of the right and the righteousness of secession, it is necessary to make clear the belief of the Southern people on the outbreak of the war, in order to make clear Lee's point of view and the ground of his action; and this may hardly be done better than by citing the words of one of the leading Northern historians of the war—for the fair-minded presentation in his studies of this subject gave the late John C. Ropes the right to speak

upon it with authority. "The attitude then," he says, after a brief historical summary of the steps which had led up to secession, "which the seceding States assumed toward the States which remained in the Union was that of foreign nations, as one by one they adopted their ordinances of secession and withdrew their senators and representatives from Congress. And there can be no reasonable doubt that when, in any State, the ordinance of secession had been adopted, the people of that State—or the great majority of them at least—felt that their allegiance was now due solely to their State; and even those persons who had strongly and earnestly opposed the secession movement, whether on grounds of policy or on grounds of right, felt themselves none the less bound loyally to serve their State, now that it had seceded.

"All this it is of the greatest importance to know, and continually to bear in mind, if we would understand the attitude of the Southern people during the war. They were not, in their own opinion, *rebels* at all; they were defending their States—that is, the *nations* to which they conceived themselves to belong—from invasion and conquest. The character which this conviction of the Southern people gave to the contest was most noticeable; it is not too much to say that none of the usual features of a rebellion were to be perceived in the South during the war. There was, for instance, nothing in the temper of the South to suggest that the war was carried on for the redress of grievances—as is always the case among a rebellious population. On the contrary, the attitude of the

South was from the beginning one of resistance to the uttermost; it was, in fine, the attitude of a nation repelling invasion, dismemberment, conquest. And, we repeat, it is of the first importance that we should recognize the grounds of this wellnigh universal feeling among the Southern people if we would understand the causes of the unanimity and devotion with which they, for four long years, withstood the armies of the United States."

Having followed this with a presentation of the Northern point of view at that time, Mr. Ropes goes on to show that "the Northern people were very certain that in 1861, at any rate, the United States constituted but one nation," and that the feeling that they were "charged with the important task of preserving intact the great republic of the world, inspired the people of the North with a determination to maintain the integrity of the nation at any cost. The war," he frankly states, "enlisted the patriotic feelings, properly so-called, of both the contending parties. The North was inspired with a lofty determination to be true to the duty of maintaining in all its integrity the great republic of the Western Continent; the South was equally resolute to defend the independence of her several nationalities.

"These differences were irreconcilable. The North could not admit the contention of the South. She denied the right of secession; in her view the seceding States were States in insurrection. The parties were thus from the outset hopelessly at variance regarding the very terms of the controversy."

While arguing that "the fact that the unadmissible claims to independence were set up by communities which professed devotion to the institution of slavery —a system repugnant to the enlightenment and humanity of the age—drew to the Union side the moral approval of the great mass of the Northern people," he disposes briefly of the claim so commonly asserted and believed, that the war was waged by the North for the purpose of abolishing slavery in the South, and declares that "that was certainly not the case." The war was prosecuted to put down all resistance to the National Government.

This able historian, having given briefly his view of the causes which led to this unhappy and disastrous war, concludes in these words, in which all fair-minded men must unite: "The courage and endurance displayed by both sides were wonderful indeed; and it is clearly desirable that the sources and springs of so much valor and so much fortitude should be distinctly identified." [1]

When the great conflict came, the time which tried men's souls, no soul in all the limits of this broad country was more tried than that lofty soul which had for its home the breast of Robert E. Lee. Every sentiment of affection, ambition, and pride bound him to the Union. A glimpse of his love for and pride in his country may be found in a letter written during his stay in Texas, in 1856. Writing of the national holiday —the Fourth of July—to his wife he says: "Mine was spent, after a march of thirty miles, on one of the branches of the Brazos, under my blanket, elevated on

[1] "Story of the Civil War," Ropes, I, pp. 3–9.

four sticks driven in the ground, as a sunshade. The sun was fiery hot, the atmosphere like a blast from a hot-air furnace, the water salt, still my feelings for my country were as ardent, my faith in her future as true, and my hope for her advancement as unabated as they would have been under better circumstances."[1] In December, 1860, he writes: "Feeling the aggression of the North, resenting their denial of the equal rights of our citizens to the common territory of the commonwealth, etc., I am not pleased with the course of the 'Cotton States,' as they term themselves. In addition to their selfish, dictatorial bearing, the threats they throw out against the 'Border States,' as they call them, if they will not join them, argues little for the benefit or peace of Virginia, should she determine to coalesce with them. While I wish to do what is right, I am unwilling to do what is wrong at the bidding of the South or of the North." And in January following he writes: "As far as I can judge from the papers, we are between a state of anarchy and civil war. May God avert from us both! . . . I see that four States have declared themselves out of the Union. Four more apparently will follow their example. Then if the border States are dragged into the gulf of revolution, one half of the country will be arrayed against the other, and I must try and be patient and wait the end; for I can do nothing to hasten or retard it."

Such was the feeling of this Virginian for the Union, which was to be put aside at the call of duty. He was a Union man, and viewed secession with abhorrence as

[1] Letter of August 4, 1856, cited in Jones's "Lee," p. 80.

revolution. Only one thing he viewed with more abhorrence—dishonor.

Writing from Texas of secession in the beginning of 1861, he said: "The South, in my opinion, has been aggrieved by the act of the North. I feel the aggression and am willing to take every proper step for redress. It is the principle I contend for, not individual or private interest. As an American citizen I take great pride in my country, her prosperity and institutions. But I can anticipate no greater calamity for this country than a dissolution of the Union. It would be an accumulation of all the evils we complain of, and I am willing to sacrifice everything but honor for its preservation. I hope, therefore, that all constitutional means will be exhausted before there is a resort to force. Secession is nothing but revolution. . . . Still a Union that can only be maintained by swords and bayonets, and in which strife and civil war are to take the place of brotherly love and kindness, has no charm for me. I shall mourn for my country, and for the welfare and progress of mankind. If the Union is dissolved and the government disrupted, I shall return to my native State and share the miseries of my people, and, save in defence, will draw my sword no more." [1]

The agony which he endured when the crucial time came may possibly never be known to us. We have an account given by Mrs. Lee of the manner in which he reached his decision. The Rev. Dr. J.

[1] Letter of January 23, 1861, cited in Jones's "Life and Letters of R. E. Lee," p. 120.

William Jones, who knew them both well and was intrusted with many family papers, tells us that "the night his letter of resignation was to be written, he asked to be left alone for a time, and while he paced the chamber above, and was heard frequently to fall upon his knees and engage in prayer for divine guidance, she waited, and watched, and prayed below. At last he came down, came collected, almost cheerfully, and said: 'Well, Mary, the question is settled. Here is my letter of resignation, and a letter I have written to General Scott.'" All night he had wrestled; but in the morning light had come.[1] This is the letter:

ARLINGTON, VA., *April* 20, 1861.

*General:* Since my interview with you on the 18th inst., I have felt that I ought not longer to retain my commission in the army. I therefore tender my resignation, which I request you will recommend for acceptance. It would have been presented at once but for the struggle it has cost me to separate myself from a service to which I have devoted the best years of my life and all the ability I possessed. During the whole of that time—more than a quarter of a century—I have experienced nothing but kindness from my superiors, and a most cordial friendship from my comrades. To no one, general, have I been as much indebted as to yourself for uniform kindness and consideration, and it has always been my ardent desire to merit your approbation. I shall carry to the grave the most grateful recollections of your kind consideration, and your name and fame will always be dear to me.

Save in the defence of my native State, I never

[1] Jones's "Life and Letters of Robert E. Lee," p. 132.

desire again to draw my sword. Be pleased to accept my most earnest wishes for the continuance of your happiness and prosperity, and believe me most truly yours,

R. E. Lee.

His wife's family were strongly Union in their sentiments, and the writer has heard that powerful family influences were exerted to prevail on him to adhere to the Union side. "My husband has wept tears of blood," wrote Mrs. Lee to his old commander, Scott, who did him the justice to declare that he knew he acted under a compelling sense of duty.

His letters to his family and to his friends, though self-restrained, as was the habit of the man, show plainly to those who knew his character how stern was the sense of duty under which Lee acted when in his own person he had to meet the question whether he should take part against his native State. Unlike many other officers who knew no home but the post where they were quartered, Lee's home was in Virginia, and to this beautiful home in his most distant and engrossing service his heart had ever yearned.

Lee had no personal interests to subserve connected with the preservation of the institution of slavery; his inclinations and his views all tended the other way. "In this enlightened age," he had already written, "there are few, I believe, but will acknowledge that slavery as an institution is a moral and political evil." He had set free the slaves he owned in his own right, and was "in favor of freeing all the slaves in the South, giving to each owner a bond to be the first

paid by the Confederacy when its independence should be secured."[1]

The slaves owned by Mrs. Lee he manumitted in 1862, or in January, 1863. In fact, it is a curious commentary on the motives connected with the war, that while Lee had set his slaves free, Grant is said to have continued in the ownership of slaves until they were emancipated by the government of the United States.[2]

It was, however, not so much the freeing of these slaves as the compassion and affection that breathe in his letters about them that testify Lee's character. His care that every one should have his papers, even though he might have gone off to the North; his provision for their wages; his solicitude for the weak and feeble among them, all testify to the feeling that the Virginian master had for his servants.

In February, 1861, the seven Cotton States that had seceded met in convention in Montgomery, Ala., and united themselves in an independent government, which they termed the Confederate States of America. On the 12th of February, negotiations to bring about the withdrawal of the garrisons of the forts in Charleston harbor having failed, and the government being engaged in revictualling and strengthening Fort Sumter, the fort was bombarded and later surrendered. The

[1] "The Confederate Cause and Conduct of the War," p. 22; "Official Report of the History Committee, Grand Camp, C. V.," by the late Hunter McGuire, M.D., LL.D., Richmond, Va. See also Lee's letter of December 27, 1856, "Life and Letters of Robert E. Lee," Jones, p. 82.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 23, note, where Mrs. Grant is given as authority for the statement that "these slaves came to him from my father's family; for I lived in the West when I married the general, who was then a lieutenant in the army."

following day Mr. Lincoln issued a peremptory call to the unseceded States to furnish quotas of 75,000 troops.

The crisis that came rent Virginia. It was known that in the event of war, should Virginia secede, her soil would become the battle-ground. Lee had no illusion as to this, nor had he any illusion as to the fury and duration of the war if it should come. Whatever delusions others might cherish, he knew the Union thoroughly, and knew the temper and the mettle of the people of both sections. In the dread shadow of war the people of Virginia selected for the great convention which was to decide the question of remaining in the Union or taking part with the other Southern States the most conservative men within her borders. Thus, the Virginia convention was a Whig body with a large majority of stanch Union men, the first Whig body that ever sat in the State.

Throughout its entire duration this great body of representative Virginians resisted all the influences that were brought to bear on them, both from the South and from the people of the State, who, under unreasoning provocation, gradually changed their opinion and began to clamor for secession. Only two weeks before the final act by which she severed her connection with the Union she, by a two-thirds majority, rejected the idea of secession. A relief squadron sailed for Charleston while negotiations were going on, and preparations for war were being pushed which could only mean one thing. As a last and supreme effort to prevent war, Union men went to Washington to beg Mr. Lincoln to withdraw the garrisons of Sumter and Pickens, and

understood him to say that he had been willing to take it under favorable consideration.[1] The reply when it came was the imperative call for troops to be furnished by the States. It meant war and the invasion of the State. Even after Sumter was fired on, every effort was made by the State to bring about a reconciliation between the estranged and divided sections. But it was too late. Troops were already marching on her. The State of Lee did not make war. War was made on her. And under the shock Virginia, on the 17th day of April, solemnly reversed her former action and seceded from the Union she had done so much to create and so much to make great.

"To have acceded to the demand [for her quota of troops to attack South Carolina] would," says Henderson, "have been to abjure the most cherished principles of her political existence. . . . Neutrality was impossible. She was bound to furnish her tale of troops and thus belie her principles, or to secede at once and reject with a clean conscience the President's mandate. . . . The world has long since done justice to the motives of Cromwell and of Washington, and signs are not wanting that before many years have passed it will do justice to the motives of the Southern people."

Speaking of Virginia's action specifically, he declares: "Her best endeavors were exerted to maintain the peace between the hostile sections, and not till her liberties were menaced did she repudiate a compact

[1] Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, 1st Sess. 39th Cong., pp. 71, 114, 115.

which had become intolerable. It was to preserve the freedom which her forefathers had bequeathed her, and which she desired to hand down unsullied to future generations, that she acquiesced in the revolution." [1]

Her action concluded her citizens. This was Lee's view, as he, after the war, stated under oath before the commission appointed to inquire into the reconstruction of the States, and it was the view of every man who sat in her convention, Unionist and Secessionist. Ninety-nine out of every hundred of the intelligent men in what was known as Old Virginia, the great section east of the Alleghanies which had largely made her history, bowed to her decree, and not with the less unanimity that a considerable element among them were grief-stricken at her decision to separate from the Union which their fathers had done so much to create.[2]

Among these was Robert E. Lee. "I can contemplate no greater calamity for the country than a dissolution of the Union," wrote Lee in January. In April the calamity had come. The Union was dissolved in so far as his State was concerned, and he had only one course left that he could take with honor. Before him stood the example of his life-long model, Washington, who, having fought with Braddock under the English flag, when war came between England and his State,

[1] Henderson's "Life of Stonewall Jackson," I, pp. 101, 102.

[2] The writer's father was a stanch Union man, and stood out against secession till the last; but three days after Virginia seceded he enlisted as a private in an infantry company, known as the "Patrick Henry Rifles," Co. C, 3d Va. Regt., later 15th Va. Regt., and fought through to Appomattox.

threw in his lot with his people. To him his thoughts recurred not only at this moment of supreme decision, but years afterward, in the seclusion of the little mountain town where he spent the evening of his days, as the head of the academic institution which Washington had endowed. "In the interviews between General Scott and Colonel Lee," says Long, "it is stated that the veteran commander earnestly sought to persuade the younger officer not to throw up his commission, telling him that it would be the greatest mistake of his life. But to all his pleadings Colonel Lee returned but one answer—that his sense of duty was stronger with him than any prospects of advancement, replying to the appeal not to send in his resignation in the following words: 'I am compelled to; I cannot consult my own feelings in this matter.' " [1]

Two or three days later, on the 20th of April, the same day on which he tendered the resignation of his command of his regiment of cavalry, he wrote to both his brother and sister, informing them of the grounds of his action. To his brother, with whom he had had an earnest consultation on the subject two days before, he stated that, after the most anxious inquiry as to the correct course for him to pursue, he had decided the matter in his own mind, and had concluded to resign—had, indeed, sent in his resignation—and he had no desire ever again to draw his sword save in defence of his native State. To his sister, whose husband and son espoused the Union cause, he wrote:

"With all my devotion to the Union, and the feeling

[1] General A. L. Long's "Memoirs of Robert E. Lee."

of loyalty and duty of an American citizen, I have not been able to make up my mind to raise my hand against my relatives, my children, my home. I have, therefore, resigned my commission in the army, and save in defence of my native State, with the sincere hope that my poor services may never be needed, I hope I may never be called on to draw my sword. I know you will blame me; but you must think as kindly of me as you can, and believe that I have endeavored to do what I thought right."

Could any appeal have come straighter from the heart! That they might see how he felt the step he took, he enclosed to his brother and sister a copy of the letter he had written General Scott.

All that we know is that, sacrificing place and honors and emoluments, leaving his home to the sack of the enemy already preparing to seize it, he decided in the sight of God, under the all-compelling sense of duty; and this is enough for us to know. What did the politicians clamoring for war know of the motives that inspired his high soul! His letter to General Scott tendering his resignation is full of noble dignity, and not without a note of noble pathos where he says, in its conclusion, "I shall carry to the grave the most grateful recollection of your kind consideration, and your name and fame will always be dear to me." And to his dying day he always held his old commander in undiminished affection and honor.

Yet, however clear Lee was in his view as to his own duty, he left others to judge for themselves. Holding that the matter was one of conscience, he did

not attempt to decide the momentous question for others—not even for his own son. Nearly a month after he had resigned (May 13, 1861), he wrote to his wife: "Tell Custis he must consult his own judgment, reason, and conscience as to the course he may take. I do not wish him to be guided by my wishes or example. If I have done wrong, let him do better. The present is a momentous question which every man must settle for himself and upon principle." Custis, who had graduated at the head of his class at West Point, had been assigned to the Engineers, and on his resignation from the army, soon after his father wrote this letter, was assigned to duty in preparing the defences of Richmond. He later rose to the rank of major-general, C. S. A.

After the war, when Lee was perhaps the most famous captain of the world, he from time to time recurred to this action. For example, in a letter to General Beauregard, written the day after his entrance on his duties at Washington College, he refers to it:

"I need not tell you," he says, "that true patriotism sometimes requires men to act exactly contrary at one period to that which it does at another, and the motive which impels them—the desire to do right—is precisely the same. History is full of illustrations of this. Washington himself is an example. [He was ever his example.] He fought at one time against the French under Braddock, in the service of the king of Great Britain; at another, he fought with the French at Yorktown, under the orders of the Continental Congress, against him. He has not been branded by the

world with reproach for this; but his course has been applauded."

To the committee of Congress before whom he was called after the war, he stated that he resigned because he believed that the act of Virginia in withdrawing herself from the United States carried him along with it as a citizen of Virginia, and that her laws and acts were binding upon him.[1]

On another occasion he stated his motives in his action at this crisis. He says in a letter to an old friend:[2] "I must give you my thanks for doing me the justice to believe that my conduct during the last five years has been governed by my sense of duty. I had no other guide, nor had I any other object than the defence of those principles of American liberty upon which the constitutions of the several States were originally founded, and unless they are strictly observed I fear there will be an end to republican government in this country."

While the harpies were screaming and clamoring, and blind partisanship was declaiming about leaving him to the "avenging pen of history," his high soul dwelt in the serene air of consciousness of duty performed. He said to General Wade Hampton, in June, 1869: "I could have taken no other course save in dishonor, and if it were all to be gone over again, I should act in precisely the same way."

Thus spoke his constant soul. It was his deliberate

[1] Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, 1st Sess. 39th Cong., p. 133.

[2] In a letter of July 9, 1866, to Captain James May.

judgment on calm reflection, with all the consequences known to him. As before writing it he cast his mind back, how he must have seen everything in the clear light of the inexorable past—all the sacrifices he had made: the chief command of the Union armies, with a great fleet at his back to keep open his lines of communication, hold the world for his recruiting ground, and blockade the South until starvation forced capitulation. It had lifted Grant from poverty and obscurity to the Presidency, while his own choice, to follow his State and obey her sacred laws, had reduced him from station and affluence to poverty and toil. His beautiful home had been confiscated and turned into a cemetery. Its priceless treasures, endeared by association with Washington, had been seized and scattered. A trial for treason impended. He had been indicted with Mr. Davis by a mixed grand jury of negroes and whites, selected for the purpose, and the furious pack were yet trying to hunt him down. Yet there was no repining—no questioning. "There was quietness in that man's mind." When the sky was darkened he had simply lighted the candles and gone on with his duty.

"Duty is the sublimest word in our language," he had declared long before, and by it as a pilot-star he ever steered his steadfast course, abiding with calm satisfaction whatever issue God decreed.

"We are conscious that we have humbly tried to do our duty," he said, about a year after the war; "we may, therefore, with calm satisfaction trust in God and leave results to Him."

In this devotion to duty and calm reliance on God lay the secret of his life. The same spirit animated his great lieutenant. "Duty belongs to us, consequences belong to God," said Jackson. The same spirit animated the men who followed them. It was the teaching of the Southern home which produced the type of character, the deep foundations of which were devotion to duty and reliance on God.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESOURCES

And now, dealing with the fruits of character, we come to the proposition, whether Lee was, as some have claimed, a great captain only for defensive operations, or was a great captain without reservation or limitation—one of the great captains of history whose genius was equal to every exigency of war to which human genius may rise.

The question involved is of his greatness both as a soldier and as a man. And to some extent it reaches far beyond the confines of the South and involves the basic traits of race and of civilization. It was nobly said by Mr. Charles Francis Adams, Sr., to whom almost as much as to Lincoln or Grant the final result of the war was due, when, as the representative of the United States in England, he was challenged on an occasion with the argument that the armies of the South had defeated the armies of the North, and was asked what he had to say about it: "That they also are my countrymen." Thus, Lee's genius and Lee's fame are the possession of the whole country and the whole race, which his virtue honored.

And first, in weighing his abilities as a captain, we may ask: What constitutes a great captain? The

question takes us far into the records of both war and peace. To most men the answer will come by the process of recalling the few—the very few—whom history has by universal consent placed in the first rank. They are Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar, Frederick, and Napoleon, with Cromwell, Turenne, Eugene, Gustavus, Marlborough, Washington, Wellington in a class so close to them in fame as to leave in doubt the rank to which at least one or two of them should be assigned. And on their heels crowd a concourse of captains great and victorious, yet easily distinguishable from the first, if confusingly close on the others.

Napoleon reckoned as his masters for constant study the first four, and Gustavus, Turenne, and Eugene.

Among the modern captains stand two conspicuous Americans: first, Washington, whose greatness proved equal to every exaction, and who gave promise that he would have commanded successfully under all conditions that might have arisen; and, secondly, the persistent, indomitable Grant, victor of Vicksburg, Missionary Ridge, and Appomattox, not so brilliant as Marlborough or Frederick, for no flashing stroke of genius like Blenheim or Leuthen adorned his record, but able, resourceful, constant, indomitable, like Scipio or Cromwell.

What placed those few men of the first rank before all others? Not final success. For though success final and absolute crowned most of them, final and irrevocable defeat was the last reward of others, and these the greatest: Hannibal and Napoleon. Such

rank, then, was won notwithstanding ultimate defeat, and in reckoning its elements, final success bears no essential part.

Studying these captains closely, we discern in all certain gifts divided as they were by centuries and by the equally vast gulf of racial differences. First, imagination—the divine imagination to conceive a great cause and the means to support it. It may be to conquer the world, or Rome, or Europe. I conceive that it was this supreme gift that led Alexander to sleep with the casket-set of the Iliad under his pillow beside his dagger, and to declare them the best compendium of the soldier's art.

Next, there must be the comprehensive grasp that seizes and holds firmly great campaigns in their completeness, together with the mastery of every detail in their execution, both great and small. There must be incarnate energy; a tireless mind in a tireless body, informed with zeal; the mental, moral, and physical courage in complete and overpowering combination to compel men to obedience, instant and loyal, under all conditions whatsoever; to inspire them with new forces and endow them with the power to carry out orders through every possible chance and change. These, taken all together, give the grand strategy. Its foundation is the combination in a brave soldier of a rare imagination and of a rarer intellect. No amount of fighting power or of capacity for calling it forth in others proves this endowment. In the Napoleonic wars, "Ney and Blücher," says Henderson, "were probably the best fighting generals of France

and Prussia. But neither could be trusted to conduct a campaign." [1]

Then there must be the supreme constancy to withstand every shock of surprise or defeat without a tremor or a doubt, before which mere courage becomes paltry, and constant, imminent danger dwindles to a bare incident, serving only to quicken the spirit and fan its last ember to a consuming flame.

With these must exist an intuitive and profound knowledge of human nature and of men, singly and in combination; power to divine the adversary's every design, and to fathom his deepest intention; equal to every exigency, amounting to inspiration; all culminating in the power to foresee, to prepare for, divine, and seize the critical moment, and, mastering Fate, win where others would lose, or, having lost, save where others would be destroyed. Then there must be the intuitive knowledge of men and the capacity to pick and inspire and use them. There must be a profound and exact knowledge of the art of war as practised by the great masters of all ages. And finally, fusing all in one complete and harmonious whole, crowning this whole with the one final and absolute essential must be the God-given personal endowment of genius, undefined, indefinable; unmeasured, immeasurable; sometimes flaming at the very first, sometimes slumbering through years to burst forth at the moment of supreme crisis; sometimes hardly recognized until its light is caught down the long perspective of the years, but, when caught, recognized as genius.

[1] Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson," I, p. 93.

Without this a man may be a great captain, a victorious captain; but not the greatest or among the greatest.

Thus, we come to the measure of Lee's greatness as a captain.

The measure of a captain's abilities must rest, at last, on his achievement as gauged by his resources.

Let us see what Lee accomplished with his means; then we shall be the better able to reckon the measure of his success. Let us turn aside for a moment for the consideration of a few figures. They are a dry and unpalatable diet, but, after all, it was to the science of arithmetic that the South yielded at the end.

The South began the war with a white population of about 5,500,000. Of these her military population numbered about 1,065,000,[1] but one-fifth of these were inhabitants of the mountain regions, who warmly espoused the side of the Union.

The North began the war with a white population of about 22,000,000. Of these her fighting men whom she could call into the field numbered about 3,900,000.[2] The South enlisted at most about 900,000. The North enrolled of her fighting men about 1,700,000,[3] besides which she enlisted of foreigners about 700,000 and of negroes about 186,000.

[1] Besides these she had a servile population of about 3,500,000, of which a certain proportion were available for raising subsistence for the army.

[2] Besides, of the negroes, the North drew into her armies about 186,000, they being the most able-bodied of this class.

[3] *Cf.* "Numbers and Losses in the Civil War in America," pp. 40 and 50, Colonel Thomas L. Livermore. (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.)

The North had an organized National Government, with all departments—State, War, Navy, Treasury, and Justice—perfectly organized and equipped, while the South not only had to organize her Confederated Government, but fought on a principle of States' Rights, which left to each State a power capable of neutralizing the general government at the most critical junctures. The North had about $11,000,000,000 of taxable values as against about $5,000,000,000 in the South, of which $2,000,000,000 was represented by the slaves. The South had the advantage of the inner line; but she was not only assailable by sea, she was divided by numerous great rivers accessible to the enemy's fleet, and she was cut in half by a great mountain region which stretched like a vast bar across her entire extent, and was occupied by a brave and bitterly hostile population that furnished to the Union armies some 180,000 fighting men. Had this population sided with the South, the advantage to her would have been immeasurable. Maryland and Kentucky would have joined the Confederacy; West Virginia and East Tennessee and all that they represented would have flung into the Southern scale, instead of into the Northern, all their weight, and possibly the whole preponderance of weight might have been shifted. This mountain region, extended through the South, furnished not only a great recruiting ground for the Union, but a refuge for her armies and a territory as ready for her occupation as Pennsylvania or Minnesota. Without this great Union region, McClellan might have ended his days in obscurity without crossing the Kanawha—

Missionary Ridge and Chattanooga could hardly have become battle-fields, and the March to the Sea would probably never have begun.

The North had by far the best means of transportation, a large percentage of the efficient railways, and the means of railway equipment.

In addition to this, the North had nearly all the manufactures, and possessed a superiority in equipment that is incalculable. When the war broke out, the South could scarcely manufacture a tin cup or a frying-pan, a railway iron, a wool-card, or a carpenter's tool. In the possession of arms the North was as superior to the South as she was in other manufactured material. This was shown at the first battle of Manassas, when McDowell's guns, beyond the range of Beauregard's smooth-bores, hammered to pieces the Confederate left. The South improved its stock of guns that day, adding before night 25 cannon to their store; but she was generally deficient in equipment to the very end. The repeating carbines of the Federal cavalry later in the war multiplied their force many fold. General Gorgas, the chief of ordnance of the Confederate States, found within the limits of the Confederacy but "15,000 rifles and 120,000 inferior muskets, with some old flint-muskets at Richmond, and Hall's rifles and carbines at Baton Rouge. There was no powder except small quantities at Baton Rouge and at Mount Vernon, Ala. There was very little artillery and no cavalry arms or equipments." General Johnston said of Lee, that "he created the ordnance department out of nothing." The day after the victory of First Manassas, there was not

powder enough left in Virginia to fight another battle. The North possessed nearly the whole old navy, ships and men, the naval forces, and the population from which the seamen were drawn. And finally, and above all, the North had the ear of the world.

With this superiority she was enabled to blockade the South and lock her within her own confines, while the world was open to her, and she could await, with what patience she could command, the fatal result of "the policy of attrition."

No adequate account of the value of the navy to the Union side has ever been given, or, at least, has ever reached the public ear. The navy turned the scale in the war. Had the navy been on the side of the Confederacy instead of on the Union side, it is as certain that the South would have made good her position as is any other fact established by reason. The navy with its 200,000 men enabled the Union not only to seal up the South against all aid from without, but to penetrate into the heart of the Confederacy, command her interior waters, and form at once the base of supplies for the Union armies when advancing, and their protection when defeated.[1]

It is not meant to imply that figures give an exact statement of the problem that was worked out during the war; but they cast a light upon it which contributes greatly to its just comprehension.

In round numbers the South had on her muster-rolls, from first to last, less than 900,000 men. And in this

[1] *Cf.* Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson," I, chap. V, p. 113. "Judicious, indeed," he says, "was the policy which at the very outset of the war brought the tremendous pressure of the sea-power to bear against the South."

list the South had all she could muster; for, at the last, she had enlisted in her reserves all men between sixteen and sixty years. In round numbers the North had 2,700,000, and besides, had all Europe as her recruiting field.[1]

When the war closed, the South had in the field throughout her territory but 175,000 men opposed to the armies of the North, numbering 980,000 men.[2]

[1] Colonel Thomas L. Livermore, of Boston, author of the notable work, "Numbers and Losses," in a letter to the writer says: "I suppose that it would be safe to assume that eighty per cent (of the enlistments) would hold in all the Northern States. This would give about 2,234,000 individuals in the army. The Record and Business Bureau, in its memorandum of 1896, computed the average estimates of re-enlistments by different authorities at 543,393."

The Confederate forces he estimates at "1,239,000, the number shown by the census to have been within the conscript age, less the number of exempts (partly estimated and partly recorded), and an estimate of the natural deaths; or at about 1,000,000 estimated proportionally to the killed and wounded in the two armies." It will be seen that his first estimate above takes no account of the numbers of Southerners in the mountain regions who sided with the Union.

General Marcus J. Wright places the total number of the Southern troops at less than 700,000. The total number within the conscript age he places at 1,065,000.

Henderson, in his "Life of Stonewall Jackson," estimates them at about 900,000.

I have felt that possibly this trained and impartial soldier of another nation might have arrived at a fairer estimate than any one on this side the Atlantic.

For calculations of Colonel Livermore and General Wright, see Appendix A.

[2] Of 346,744 Federal soldiers examined for military service after March 6, 1863, sixty-nine per cent were Americans, the rest were foreigners. In the 35th Mass. Regt., which, says Henderson, may be taken as a typical Northern regiment, of 495 recruits received during 1864, 400 were German immigrants. (Henderson's "Life of Stonewall Jackson," 1st ed., I, p. 466.)

The South, or rather those orators who stood as the economists of the South, had supposed that her cotton and tobacco were so necessary to the rest of the world that the European nations would take her part, out of plain consideration for their own welfare. It was a great error. The value of the cotton crop exported in 1860 was $202,741,351. In

Toward the close of the war the South was well-nigh stripped naked, and for what was left she had no means of transportation. She had no nitre for her powder, no brass for her percussion caps—the very kettles and stills from the plantations had been used—and when it was necessary to repair one railroad as a line for transportation, to meet the emergency the best rails were taken up from another road less important.

The commissariat and the quartermaster's department were bad enough, and Lee's army starved to a shadow. Study of the matter will, however, convince any one that at the very last it was rather owing to the desperate condition of the lines of transportation than to mere inefficiency of the commissariat and the quartermaster's department, to which it has been so often charged, that Lee failed to carry out his final plan of effecting a junction with Johnston.[1]

In fact, from the first a considerable proportion of the equipment of the Southern armies and all of their best equipment had been captured by them on the field of battle. So regular had been their application to this source of supply that, says Henderson in his "Life of Stonewall Jackson," "the dishonesty of the Northern contractors was a constant source of complaint among the soldiers of the Army of Northern Virginia."

1861 it was $42,000,000. In 1862 it was $4,000,000. After that it was next to nothing; yet it was the principal source of revenue of the government with which to purchase such supplies and munitions of war in Europe as were brought in by blockade-runners.

[1] I can remember my surprise as a boy at seeing wagons hauling straw from my home to Petersburg, sixty-odd miles, through roads the like of which, I trust in Grace, do not now exist in the United States.

An English soldier and critic, Colonel Lawler, writing in *Blackwood's Magazine*, has declared his doubt whether any general of modern history could have sustained for four years—a longer time nowadays than Hannibal's fifteen years in Italy in times past—a war in which, possessed of scanty resources himself, he had against him so enormous an aggregate of men, horses, ships, and supplies. It is an under, rather than an over, estimate to state that during the first two years the odds, all told, were ten to one, during the last two years, twenty to one, against the Confederates.[1]

Truly, then, said General Lee to General Early, in the winter of 1865–66: "It will be difficult to get the world to understand the odds against which we fought." It is known by some in the South—the survivors of those armies who tracked the frozen roads of Virginia with bleeding feet, whose breakfast was often nothing but water from a roadside well, and whose dinner nothing but a tightened belt. Some knew it who knew the war-swept South in their boyhood, where the threat was that a crow flying over it should have to carry his rations, and the fact was more terrible than the prophecy.

But it is well for the race to make the world know it. It is well that the truth should be revealed.

In the foregoing computation it is true enough to say that we have not reckoned all the resources of the South. She had Lee, and she had Jackson; she had the men who followed them, and the women who sustained those men. "Lee and Jackson," says Henderson, in his

[1] Jones's "Lee," p. 75.

"Life of Stonewall Jackson," "were worth 200,000 men to any armies they commanded." Quoting Moltke's saying, that the junction of two armies on the field of battle is the highest achievement of military genius, he says in comment: "Tried by this test alone, Lee stands out as one of the greatest soldiers of all time. Not only against Pope, but against McClellan at Gaines's Mill, against Burnside at Fredericksburg, and against Hooker at Chancellorsville, he succeeded in carrying out the operations of which Moltke speaks."

But this is not all. No reckoning of the opposing forces can be made without taking into account the men who followed Lee and Jackson, and the women who stayed at home and sustained them. No people ever gave more promptly to their country's cause than did the old American element of the North, or would have been readier, had occasion arisen, to suffer on their country's behalf. But it is no disparagement of them to state the simple fact that the war did not reach them as a people as it reached the people of the South. Where a class gave at the North, the whole population of the South gave; whereas a fraction suffered at the North, the entire population of the South suffered. The rich grew to be as the poor, and, together with the poor, learned to know actual hunger. The delicately nurtured came to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. War in its most brutal and terrible form came to be known all over the land: known in disease without medicines; in life without the common necessaries of life; in ravaged districts, bombarded and blackened towns, burnt homesteads, ter-

rorized and starving women and children. This the South came to know throughout a large extent of her territory. Yet, through it all her people bore themselves with a constancy that must ever be a monument to them, and that even in the breast of those who were children in that stirring period must ever keep alive the hallowed memory of her undying resolution.

"All honor and praise to the fair Southern women!" declared a Richmond paper in the closing days of 1862. "May the future historian, when he comes to write of this war, fail not to award them their due share of praise." No history of this war could be written without such due award. It is not too much to say that as brave and constant as were the intrepid soldiery that with steadily wasting ranks followed Lee from Seven Pines to Appomattox, even more brave and constant were the women who stayed at home. Gentle and simple, they gave their husbands, their brothers, and their sons to the cause of the South, sorrowing chiefly that they themselves were too feeble to stand at their side. Hungering in body and heart, they bore with more than a soldier's courage, more than a soldier's hardship, and to the last, undaunted and dauntless, gave them a new courage as with tear-dimmed eyes they sustained them in the darkest hours of their despondency and defeat.

Such were among the elements which even in the South's darkest hour Lee had at his back. From such elements Lee himself had sprung, and in his character he was their supreme expression.

## CHAPTER V

### LEE IN WEST VIRGINIA

And now, bearing clearly in mind what his resources were, we may approach the question intelligently, whether Lee was, as charged by some, great only in defence and when on interior lines and behind breastworks, or was really the greatest soldier of his time, and, perhaps, of the English-speaking race.

Lee was now fifty-four years old, having reached this age without higher rank than that of colonel, the age at which most of the great captains have won their laurels and laid down their swords. But he was yet in the prime of physical and intellectual manhood. His temperate habits had borne rich fruit, and possibly in neither army had he his superior in bodily or mental force or endurance. He was "as ruddy as young David from the sheepfolds," says one who saw him then for the first time. Immediately on his resignation from the army of the United States, Lee was tendered by the governor of Virginia the command of the forces of the State, which was in the throes of preparation to repel the invasion of her territory, and on the 23d of April he received, at the hands of the president of the State convention, the commission of major-general of the Virginia forces. It was an impressive occasion, for the brief ceremony took place in the

presence of the convention which had so long stood against secession, but had declared with one voice against tolerating invasion. Virginia was there to do him honor. The president of the convention, the Hon. John Janney, in a brief speech, recalling the example of Washington, announced to him the fact that the convention had by a unanimous vote expressed their conviction that among living Virginians he was "first in war"; that they prayed he might so conduct the operations committed to his charge that it should soon be said of him that he was "first in peace," and that when that time came, he should have earned the still prouder distinction of being "first in the hearts of his countrymen." He further recalled to him that Washington in his will had given his swords to his favorite nephews, with an injunction that they should never be drawn from their scabbards except in self-defence or in defence of the rights and liberties of their country.

He said in closing: "Yesterday your mother Virginia placed her sword in your hand, upon the implied condition that we know you will keep to the letter and in spirit, that you will draw it only in defence, and that you will fall with it in your hand rather than the object for which it was placed there should fail."

To this Lee replied in the following simple words: "Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Convention: Profoundly impressed with the solemnity of the occasion, for which I must say I was not prepared, I accept the position assigned me by your partiality. I would have much preferred that your choice had fallen upon an abler man. Trusting in Almighty God, an approving

conscience, and the aid of my fellow citizens, I devote myself to the service of my native State, in whose behalf alone will I ever again draw my sword."

Thus, passing into the service of his native State in the dire hour of her need, Lee was appointed a major-general of Virginia's forces, to resist the invasion of Virginia's soil, and it was not until the end of August, when war was flagrant throughout the land, and Virginia had been actually invaded, that he became an officer of the Confederate States. Lee set to work promptly to place Virginia in a posture of defence. He established camps for instruction, and soon had some 30,000 men under drill, who in a few months increased to 60,000.

On the evening of the day on which Lee received, at the hands of the president of the Virginia convention, his commission as commander-in-chief of the naval and military forces of the commonwealth, an occasion presented itself for him to show the nobleness of his character, and he met it with the unselfishness which was the mark of the man. Among the spectators of the ceremony that day was the Hon. Alexander H. Stephens, the Vice-President of the Confederate States. He had come to Richmond for "the purpose of inducing Virginia to enter the Confederacy," which was "to undo, so far as General Lee was concerned, the work which had been that morning performed." "The members of the convention," states Mr. Stephens, "had seen at once that Lee was left out of the proposed compact that was to make Virginia one of the Confederate States, and I knew that one word, or even a look of

dissatisfaction from him would terminate the negotiations with which I was intrusted. North Carolina would act with Virginia, and either the border States would protect our lines or the battle-field be moved at once down to South Carolina and the borders of Georgia." Accordingly, that evening Mr. Stephens sought an interview with General Lee for the purpose of making to him a "proposal that he resign, without any compensation or promise therefor, the very honor and rank he had that same morning received."

Surely Lee must have recalled the difference between this proposal and the one which he had received hardly a week before, when the command of the Union armies had been tendered him; but if he did, he gave no sign of it. "General Lee met me quietly," says Mr. Stephens, "understood the situation at once, and saw that he alone stood between the Confederacy and his State. . . . General Lee did not hesitate for one moment, and while he saw that it would make matters worse to throw up his commission, he declared that no personal ambition or emolument should be considered or stand in the way!

"I had admired him in the morning," adds Mr. Stephens, "but I took his hand that night at parting with feelings of respect, and almost reverence never yet effaced. I met him at times later, and he was always the same Christian gentleman.

"Virginia became one of us, and the battle-field, as all men know, and General Lee took subordinate positions which for a time placed him nearly out of sight."

On the 2d of May Lee wrote his wife: "I have just

received Custis's letter of the 30th, inclosing the acceptance of my resignation. It is stated it will take effect on the 25th of April. I resigned on the 20th, and wished it to take effect on that day. I cannot consent to its running on further, and he must receive no pay, if they tender it, beyond that day, but return the whole if need be."

From Richmond, May 13, 1861, Lee wrote his wife: "Do not put faith in rumors of adjustment. I see no prospect for it. It cannot be while passions on both sides are so infuriated. Make your plans for several years of war. If Virginia is invaded, which appears to be designed, the main routes through the country will, in all probability, be infested and passage interrupted. I agree with you in thinking that the inflammatory articles in the papers do us much harm. I object particularly to those in the Southern papers, as I wish them to take a firm, dignified course, free from bravado and boasting. The times are indeed calamitous. The brightness of God's countenance seems turned from us, and its mercy stopped in its blissful current. It may not always be so dark, and he may in time pardon our sins and take us under his protection. Tell Custis[1] he must consult his own judgment, reason, and conscience as to the course he may take. I do not wish him to be guided by my wishes or example. If I have done wrong, let him do better. The present is a momentous question which every man must settle for himself and upon principle. Our good

[1] His son then a lieutenant in the Engineer Corps, United States army.

Bishop Meade has just come in to see me. He opens the convention to-morrow, and, I understood him to say, would preach his fiftieth anniversary sermon. God bless and guard you."

Immediately on the outbreak of war, Virginia, as anticipated, became the battle ground. In June the Confederate Government moved its capital to Richmond, and naturally the object of the Union Government became the capture of that city. General Scott, indeed, had an idea that the government should avail itself of the strong Union sentiment throughout the North-west and Central West, and, utilizing the Mississippi, should send its army down that vast inland water-way and seize New Orleans, thus cutting the Confederate South in two at the outset. But the government, with its seat at Washington, naturally thought otherwise, and the necessary consequence was the invasion of Virginia. The plan was to overrun this State and seize Richmond, where the Confederate Government was now establishing its capital, and where the only important factory of guns in the South (the Tredegar Iron Works) was situated. By this plan Washington could be protected at the same time that the advance to overrun Virginia was made. Accordingly, on the 21st of May the government troops, to the number of some 11,000 men, crossed the Potomac, seized Alexandria, and occupied the heights of Arlington, which they immediately proceeded to fortify for permanent occupation, with a view to pressing forward in obedience to the cry which was now heard on all sides: "On to Richmond!"

Three or four routes for the advance on Richmond

presented themselves for consideration, following in the main the several railroad lines which crossed Virginia, and offered lines of communication and means of transportation.

The most direct route was by the Potomac to Acquia Creek, some thirty-odd miles below Washington, and thence along the Richmond and Fredericksburg Railway by Fredericksburg and Hanover Junction. This was the route which was attempted two years later by Burnside with such disastrous consequences at Fredericksburg, and still later with variations by Hooker and Grant. Another route was by the Potomac and the Chesapeake Bay, either to the mouth of the Rappahannock, or to Fortress Monroe, at the mouth of the James, and thence up the York or the James to a point comparatively near to Richmond. This last was the route followed by McClellan in the spring of 1862. The third was along the line of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad—the present Southern Railway—running south-westerly from Alexandria by Manassas Junction, about thirty miles off (where a branch line ran westwardly through the Blue Ridge into the Shenandoah Valley), and Culpeper Court House to Gordonsville. Here it met almost at right angles the Virginia Central Railroad, running from Richmond by Hanover Junction to Gordonsville, and on by Charlottesville to Staunton, in the Valley of Virginia—the upper Shenandoah Valley. At Charlottesville another railway line ran southwardly to Lynchburg, on the upper James, and on through South-western Virginia to Tennessee. The fourth route, the longest and least feasible, lay

along the railway from Harper's Ferry, the point at which the Potomac breaks through the Blue Ridge, to Winchester, and thence through the fertile Valley of Virginia to Staunton, on the Virginia Central Railway.

Thus, it will be seen that the only all-rail route to Richmond at the time lay along the Orange and Alexandria Railway, and that the two principal points thereon were Manassas Junction (where the branch road ran through Manassas Gap into the Shenandoah Valley) and Gordonsville, where the road joined the Virginia Central Railway, the direct route from Richmond to both the upper Shenandoah Valley and the South-west. This route had the additional advantages that it ran through a fertile and open country, with comparatively good roads, and with streams less difficult to cross than lower down, where the Rappahannock and the North Anna presented serious obstacles if properly defended.

Up to this time Colonel Thomas J. Jackson had commanded the raw contingent of Southern troops who held Harper's Ferry at the point where the Shenandoah joins the Potomac and, thus reinforced, the latter breaks through the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Here had been the arsenal which John Brown had crossed into Virginia to seize in October, 1859, in his mad attempt to arouse the slaves to insurrection. It was still considered a strategic point, and on the 23d of May, General Joseph E. Johnston was sent to take command of it, and of the Army of the Shenandoah, as it was called. He had been a classmate of Lee at West Point, and had served with such distinction in the war

with Mexico that General Scott is said to have characterized him as "a great soldier." Fitz Lee, in his admirable "Life of General Lee," says of him that he became "distinguished before his beard grew," and that "his decision to fight under the flag of the South was hailed with delight by the Southern people."

Against him now was opposed Major-General Robert Patterson, of Pennsylvania, also a veteran, who had been placed by General Scott in command of the Department of Washington. Assisted by such able officers as Fitz John Porter, A. E. Burnside, George A. Thomas, and many others who later won high and deserved distinction, he had been busy organizing and equipping an army intended to seize Harper's Ferry, sweep up the valley of the Shenandoah, and, crossing the Blue Ridge, drive Beauregard from Manassas and seize this strategic point. He secured Harper's Ferry without a struggle, having, by an advance with the evident design of crossing the Potomac at Williamsport and flanking Johnston by marching to Martinsburg, forced him to abandon Harper's Ferry as untenable. Johnston posted himself at a point called Bunker Hill, with a view to fighting Patterson on selected ground if the chance offered before McClellan, who was reported to be advancing from Western Virginia, could join him. Patterson was in the act of crossing the Potomac when he received an order from General Scott to forward to Washington at once all the regular troops under his command, together with Colonel A. E. Burnside's picked Rhode Island regiment. General Scott for good reason, as appeared to him, had

changed the plan by which he had proposed to fight the first pitched battle in the valley of the Shenandoah, and now planned to fight first at Manassas, while Patterson should hold Johnston in the valley.

The commander assigned to defend this important point by the Southern government was General Beauregard, a Louisianian of French extraction, as the name implies, and a gallant and able soldier. He had commanded at Charleston at the outbreak of hostilities, where he had shown ability both as an officer and as an engineer, and he was now the idol of the Southern people, and was soon to increase this measure of approbation by his victory on the plain of Manassas.

A story used to be told, after the war, of some one having spoken to a creole gentleman of New Orleans of Lee in terms of warm praise, and having received the reply: "Yes, yes—I t'ink I have hear' Beauregard speak well of him."

It was apparent to Lee and the other trained soldiers that the first serious attempt of the Union generals would be to seize the strategic point presented by the junction at Manassas of the Orange and Alexandria Railway and of the railway running from Manassas to the Shenandoah Valley, where Johnston was opposing Patterson. Every effort was therefore made to prepare for the battle to be fought here. And to this Lee bent all his energies, organizing, equipping, and forwarding troops as fast as possible. Other points also had to be guarded. Norfolk, where Huger commanded, and the Peninsula between the York and the James River, where Magruder commanded, both had to be

protected; but the chief anxiety at this time centred on Manassas. Lee was the third in rank of the major-generals appointed by Mr. Davis, and his first service was to put Virginia in a posture of defence. That he promptly effected this was shown on the plain of Manassas, on July 21.

The troops organized for this movement were possibly about equal in number on both sides—some 30,000 men. With the invasion of Virginia the government at Washington had created what was known as the Department of Virginia, and to the command of this department was assigned General Irwin McDowell, a native of Ohio, of Virginian descent, and a gallant officer and gentleman. He laid out his plan of campaign to the satisfaction of his superiors in Washington, which was—to march on Manassas and, by turning Beauregard's left flank, manœuvre him out of his position. He was to have not less than 30,000 men, and the Southern troops in the Shenandoah Valley were to be held there by Patterson's force. This having been provided for, as was believed, McDowell, on the 16th of July, with entire confidence put his army in motion for Manassas, where his old classmate and friend, Beauregard, awaited him with equal confidence in the issue. And here, on the uplands above the little stream known as Bull Run, the first great battle on Virginia soil was fought out, on the 21st of July, five days later.

Everything went with McDowell like clockwork, only it was slow clockwork. Setting out from his camp at Alexandria on the 16th, he reached Centreville

the following day, and instead of pressing forward, he spent two days in reconnoissances, and did not attack Beauregard until the morning of the 21st. For a time after the battle began the advantage was greatly in his favor, and by three o'clock he was pressing the defensive force hard.

One thing, however, had not been provided for properly. When McDowell laid his plan of campaign before his superiors in Washington, General Scott had promised him that if Johnston, lying about Winchester, in the Shenandoah Valley beyond the Blue Ridge Mountains, some fifty miles away, attempted to reinforce Beauregard, he should find Patterson hanging on his heels. But he did not reckon with the full ability of Johnston or his lieutenants, Jackson and Stuart. It had already been decided in Richmond, where Lee was at work, with the chessboard before him, what moves and countermoves would be made, and no sooner was McDowell on the march than steps were taken to meet the shock of the approaching encounter with the full force of the Confederate armies within call. General Holmes, with his brigade backed by a battery of artillery and cavalry, was ordered up from Acquia Creek, thirty miles to the south-east, and General Johnston was also ordered to slip away from Patterson, and, crossing the Blue Ridge, join Beauregard. Holmes arrived duly, and Johnston arrived on the 20th from the Shenandoah Valley, with the brigades of Bee, Bartow, and Jackson, his other brigades, under Kirby Smith and Elzey, arriving next day. Stuart also appeared on time after a forced march across the

mountains. The numbers on both sides were about equal, but the arrival of this fresh force of Johnston's in the nick of time turned the scale. The advance of the Federals against the Confederate left was first checked, then turned into a repulse, and then into a decisive defeat, which soon became a disastrous rout.

Unfortunately for the Southern cause the victory of Manassas was not followed up. The magnitude of the disaster was fully recognized by the North, and President Lincoln issued a call the next day for 500,000 troops, and summoned from Western Virginia, where he had displayed qualities of a high order, the most promising young general in the service, George B. McClellan. But at the South it appeared as if it were generally thought that this victory had decided the issue of the war. The simple fact, however, was that the victorious army was without the necessary equipment to take the field.

Although Lee was not present in this great first battle on Virginia soil, his hand was clearly shown in the provision made for the crisis, and although he gave no outward sign by which it could be known, he must have inwardly chafed at the fate which at this critical period consigned him to the bureau service of an adjutant's office.

On June 9, 1861, he wrote to his wife: "You may be aware that the Confederate Government is established here. Yesterday I turned over to it the command of the military and naval forces of the State, in accordance with the proclamation of the governor, under an

agreement between the State and the Confederate States. I do not know what my position will be. I should like to retire to private life, so that I could be with you and the children; but if I can be of service to the State or her cause, I must continue. Mr. Davis and all his Cabinet are here." And two days afterward he displays his fortitude and his piety when he tells her: "I am sorry to learn that you are anxious and uneasy about passing events. We cannot change or hinder them, and it is not the part of wisdom to be annoyed by them. In this time of great suffering to the State and country, our private distresses we must bear with resignation, and not aggravate them by repining, trusting to a kind and merciful God to overrule them for our good."

Lee was now an officer without a command, or, possibly, even without rank. "Nominally," says Mr. Alexander H. Stephens, "General Lee lost nothing; but practically, for the time being, he lost everything. The government moved to Richmond, and Mr. Davis directed General Lee to retain his command of the Virginia troops, which was really to make him recruiting and drill inspector. . . ."

On June 14 Lee wrote to his wife from Richmond, where he was engaged in the important but somewhat humdrum labor of providing an army for another to command: "My movements are very uncertain, and I wish to take the field as soon as certain arrangements can be made. I may go at any moment to any point where it may be necessary."

On the 12th of July he wrote her again: "I am very

anxious to get into the field, but am detained by matters beyond my control. I have never heard of the assignment to which you allude—of commander-in-chief of the Southern army—nor have I any expectation or wish for it. President Davis holds that position. I have been laboring to prepare and get into the field the Virginia troops to strengthen those from other States and the threatened commands of Johnston, Beauregard, Huger, Garnett, etc. Where I shall go I do not know, as that will depend on President Davis."

Was ever soldier more unselfish!

Lee was not one of those who had any delusions as to the magnitude of the struggle, or as to Manassas having decided the fortunes of the war. On July 27, six days after the battle, he wrote Mrs. Lee again from Richmond: "That, indeed, was a glorious victory, and has lightened the pressure upon us amazingly. Do not grieve for the brave dead; but sorrow for those they have left behind—friends, relatives, and families. The former are at rest; the latter must suffer. The battle will be repeated there in greater force. I hope God will again smile on us, and strengthen our hearts and arms. I wished to partake in the former struggle, and am mortified at my absence. But the President thought it more important that I should be here. I could not have done as well as has been done, but I could have helped and taken part in a struggle for my home and neighborhood. So the work is done, I care not by whom it is done. I leave to-morrow for the army in Western Virginia."

Indeed, it is stated that so far was General Lee

from being influenced by any considerations of a selfish nature, that when Virginia joined the Southern Confederacy and left him without rank, he seriously contemplated enlisting in the company of cavalry commanded by his son.[1] General Long, his military secretary, gives this account of his first interview with General Lee. Having resigned his commission in the United States army, Long reported to Richmond, in company with three other officers, Colonels Loring and Stevenson, and Lieutenant Deshler, who had likewise resigned, and waited upon General Lee to offer their services to him. He was struck, he states, with the ease and grace of his bearing, and his courteous and mild but decided manner; and the high opinion he then formed of him was fully sustained in the intimate relations which afterward existed between them. Though at that time he had attained the age of fifty-four years, his erect and muscular frame, firm step, and the animated expression of his eye made him appear much younger. He exhibited no external signs of his rank, his dress being a plain suit of gray. His office was simply furnished with plain desks and chairs. There were no handsomely dressed aides-de-camp or staff officers filling the anteroom. There was not even a sentinel to mark the military head-quarters. His only attendants were Captain Walter Taylor—afterward Colonel Taylor—adjutant-general of the Army of Northern Virginia, and two or three clerks.

Indeed, Lee was ever the simplest of men in his personal surroundings. Again and again we have a

[1] Jones's "Life and Letters of Robert E. Lee."

glimpse of him in the correspondence and memoirs of the time. His camp equipage was of the simplest character—his table service was of "neat tin," the pieces of which slipped into each other. A single headquarters wagon sufficed for the commander of the Army of Northern Virginia, and many a brigadier rode with a more imposing staff than accompanied him.

The game, as it appears now to all, and as it appeared then to those who had to shoulder the responsibility of playing it, was, on the one side, the sealing up of the South within its own borders, the suppression of the power of the border States, such as Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri, to join the South, and the cutting in two of the section already seceded; on the other, it was the simple maintenance of the status quo of the seceded section, the power to exercise the right of secession in the border States, and the resistance of invasion. There was no claim on the part of the South to the right of invasion, and no thought of invasion of the North until the exactions of war made it necessary as a counterstroke. Even after the victory of Manassas, while the eager element clamored because the victory was not followed up, the Confederate Government held back the eager Jackson and sustained the prudent Johnston. Such being the game, it was played on both sides with clear vision and impressive determination. And no one saw more clearly than Lee the magnitude of the impending struggle.

Of Lee's far-sightedness we have signal proof in his letters. While others discussed the war as a matter of days and occasion for a summer holiday, he, with

wider knowledge and clearer prevision, reckoned its duration at full four years, and possibly at even ten. A letter from General Lee to his wife, who was still at Arlington, April 30, 1861, tells her that he is "glad to hear all is well and as yet peaceful. I fear the latter state will not continue long," he adds, "I think, therefore, you had better prepare all things for removal from Arlington—that is, plate, pictures, etc.—and be prepared at any moment. Where to go is the difficulty. When the war commences no place will be exempt; in my opinion, indeed, all the avenues into the State will be the scene of military operations. I wrote to Robert [his son] that I could not consent to take boys from their schools and young men from their colleges and put them in the ranks at the beginning of the war, when they are not needed. The war may last ten years. Where are our ranks to be filled from then?"

And again he writes: "I am very anxious about you. You have to move, and make arrangements to go to some point of safety, which you must select. The Mount Vernon plate and pictures ought to be secured. War is inevitable, and there is no telling when it will burst around you. Virginia yesterday, I understand, joined the Confederate States. What policy they may adopt I cannot conjecture."

It is said that one of the few speeches he ever made was that in which, responding to urgent calls from a crowd assembled at a railway station to see him, he, in a few grave sentences, bade them go home and prepare for a long and terrible war.

We have seen that immediately after the victory of Manassas, when many were asserting that the war would end at once, Lee wrote his wife that another battle would have to be fought there. "We must make up our minds," he wrote, in February of 1862, "to meet with reverses and to overcome them. But the contest must be long, and the whole country has to go through much suffering." [1]

His views on the matter of the *Trent* were as sound as though he had been trained in diplomacy all his life. "I think," he writes, "the United States Government, notwithstanding this moral and political commitment at Wilkes's act, if it finds that England is in earnest, and that it will have to fight or retract, will retract. We must make up our minds to fight our battles ourselves, expect to receive aid from no one, and make every necessary sacrifice of money, comfort, and labor to bring the war to a successful close. The cry is too much for help. I am mortified to hear it. We want no aid. We want to be true to ourselves, to be prudent, just, and bold." [2]

The first steps taken at the North were to blockade the Southern ports from the Chesapeake to the Rio Grande with the efficient navy of the Union, to seize the Mississippi, and to overawe the border States.

The western portion of Virginia, traversed by the great Appalachian Range stretching in a vast barrier across the State, and penetrated only by the Baltimore

[1] Letters to Mrs. Lee, dated April 30, 1861, and February 8, 1862, Jones's "Lee," p. 150.

[2] Letter to his son, General G. W. C. Lee, December 29, 1861.

and Ohio Railroad, had, partly by reason of the origin and character of the population, partly by reason of their direct association with the North and West; but mainly owing to the absence of slaves among them, been unaffected by the causes which created the friction between the North and South. Here in this mountainous and substantially non-slave-holding region bordering on the States of Ohio and Pennsylvania, and mainly trading by way of the Ohio River and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad with the North and West, the population was almost as strongly Union in sentiment as that of the States with which they marched, and, finally, when the conflict came, the major portion of the population sided with the North and stood for the Union.

The importance of securing this great western section of the leading Southern State was manifest to both sides, and from the first, troops were thrown into the State by both sides to control and hold it. General Robert S. Garnett had been early despatched with a command to protect the western border and awe into submission the wavering and the disaffected. He was a Virginian and had served with distinction in the Mexican War, and on his resignation from the army on the outbreak of the war had been assigned to duty as adjutant-general of the Virginian troops, and later had been commissioned a general of the Confederate army. Opposed to Garnett in Western Virginia was a general who was soon to become the hope and mainstay of the government at Washington, and the idol of the Union army, George B. McClellan. He was Garnett's junior

by several years, and had graduated at West Point in 1846 in the same class with Stonewall Jackson and A. E. Burnside. He had been assigned to the Engineers, and after achieving distinction in Mexico had resigned from the army to enter civil life. He was engaged in Ohio as an engineer at the outbreak of the war, and having promptly offered his services to the Governor of Ohio, and been appointed major-general of Ohio volunteers, had shown marked capacity in organizing and forwarding troops. He had now been placed in command of the Department of the Ohio, and recognizing the importance of seizing and holding the mountain region of Virginia, he had on the 26th of May, without waiting for orders, crossed the Ohio River and thrown troops over into that section.[1] The fruits of this early occupation were so apparent, and his services were so efficient, that he soon secured the confidence of the government at Washington, and later was advanced to the highest command. Pushing forward now into the heart of this Union section of Virginia, and outflanking Garnett, who occupied, with a force of some 5,000 men, a position at Laurel Hill, on the turnpike leading to the county seat of Randolph County, he forced Garnett from his position, cut off and captured on July 12 a portion of his force, posted on Rich Mountain, consisting of about 560 men, under Lieutenant-Colonel Pegram, and following up his advantage with rapidity, overtook Garnett at Carrick's Ford, on the main branch of Cheat River. In the fight which ensued Garnett was killed and his command routed. The course of events

[1] "McClellan's Own Story."

had made the eastern rather than the western border of this section the seat of operations, with Harper's Ferry, or more properly Winchester, as the key to the situation, and when Harper's Ferry, on the advance of Patterson, soon after the first outbreak of war, fell into the hands of the Federal troops, McClellan had seized the passes that commanded the western region and fortified them strongly. McClellan's rapidity of movement in this campaign, aided possibly by his Napoleonic style of congratulation to his army, beginning, "Soldiers, I am more than satisfied with you," gained him the sobriquet of "The Little Napoleon." Two circumstances were noted at the time, and later became conspicuous in the light of subsequent events: he overestimated the force opposed to him at more than double its actual strength, and General Scott, in expressing how "charmed the general-in-chief, the Cabinet, and the President were with his activity and valor," declared that they did not mean "to precipitate him, as he was fast enough." The irony of fate at times is curious. This despatch of Scott's bore the same date with Lee's letter expressing regret that he could not be in the field. We shall see what a year was to bring forth.

McClellan, outmatching the commands and the commanders opposed to him, had thus soon showed substantial success for the Union side. Scott had hitherto commanded the armies of the Union, but as a younger man was needed for such onerous service, on the 1st of November, 1861, General George B. McClellan was appointed to the chief command.

Possibly, the fact that Scott was a Virginian had something to do with the decision, as it almost certainly had to do with the passing by of Thomas in the earlier stages of the war; the latter's name not even having been mentioned in the President's congratulatory order on the victory of Mills Springs, which Thomas had won in Kentucky. It is said that Mr. Lincoln, in reply to criticism of the omission, said: "He is a Virginian; let him wait." [1]

The day after the battle of Manassas, McClellan was telegraphed from Washington that his presence there was necessary, and on his arrival, he was promptly assigned to the command of the Department of Washington and North-eastern Virginia, while Rosecrans succeeded to the command in Western Virginia. Rosecrans, having thus succeeded to the command of the troops despatched to hold Western Virginia, was now leading an invading force up the Kanawha, while Reynolds was posted on the Cheat River to guard the chief avenue of communication between the East and the West.

The Confederate forces in this mountainous region were divided into several detachments. Two of them were on the Kanawha under command, respectively, of Generals Floyd and Wise, who had raised brigades and were both very popular with the Virginians, John B. Floyd having been Secretary of War in President Buchanan's Cabinet, and Henry A. Wise having been governor of Virginia. And two others were farther

[1] "Life of George B. Thomas," by Thomas B. Van Horn, p. 56. Ropes's "Story of the War," I, p. 209, n.

eastward under Generals Loring and H. R. Jackson. Among these commanders the spirit of co-operation left much to be desired. Owing partly to the hostility of the population and partly to the lack of harmony among the commanding officers, the cause of the South steadily waned in this trans-Alleghany region, and in July it had become manifest that a soldier of rank and experience must be sent to Western Virginia, unless it was to be lost permanently to the South. After Johnston had been offered the command in this territory and had declined the billet, General Lee, who was ready to go anywhere, was sent out to Western Virginia to take command of the somewhat disorganized forces in that hostile region.

Lee left Richmond for Western Virginia on the same day (July 28) that McClellan, called from that region, took command at Washington of the army designed to capture Richmond. It was Lee's first opportunity to serve in the field. His own letters from Western Virginia throw a light not only on the situation there, but on his character.

On his arrival he wrote to his wife, giving an idea of his surroundings and a hint of the difficulties by which he found himself confronted. He says: "I reached here yesterday to visit this portion of the army. The points from which we can be attacked are numerous, and the enemy's means unlimited, so we must always be on the alert. It is so difficult to get our people, unaccustomed to the necessities of war, to comprehend and promptly execute the measures required for the occasion. General Johnson, of Georgia, commands on

the Monterey line, General Loring on this line, and General Wise, supported by General Floyd, on the Kanawha line. The soldiers everywhere are sick. The measles are prevalent throughout the whole army. You know that disease leaves unpleasant results and attacks the lungs, etc., especially in camp, where the accommodations for the sick are poor. I travelled from Staunton on horseback. A part of the road I travelled over in the summer of 1840 on my return to St. Louis, after bringing you home. If any one had told me that the next time I travelled that road would have been my present errand, I should have supposed him insane. I enjoyed the mountains as I rode along. The views were magnificent. The valleys so peaceful, the scenery so beautiful. What a glorious world Almighty God has given us! How thankless and ungrateful we are!"[1]

And from Valley Mountain, August 9, 1861, he writes: "I have been three days coming from Monterey to Huntersville. The mountains are beautiful, fertile to the tops, covered with the richest sward and blue grass and white clover. The enclosed fields wave with a natural growth of timothy. This is a magnificent grazing country, and all it wants is labor to clear the mountain sides of timber. It has rained, I believe, some portion of every day since I left Staunton. Now it is pouring. Colonel Washington, Captain Taylor, and myself are in one tent, which as yet protects us. I have enjoyed the company of our son while I have been here. He is very well and very active, and as yet

[1] Letter, dated August 4, 1861.

the war has not reduced him much. He dined with me yesterday and preserves his fine appetite. To-day he is out reconnoitring, and has the full benefit of this fine rain. I fear he is without his overcoat, as I do not recollect seeing it on his saddle. I told you he had been promoted to a major in the cavalry, and he is the commanding cavalry officer on this line at present. He is sanguine, cheerful, and hearty as ever. I sent him some cornmeal this morning, and he sent me some butter—a mutual exchange of good things. The men are suffering from measles and so on, as elsewhere, but are cheerful and light-hearted. The nights are cool and the water delicious. Send word to Miss Lou Washington that her father is sitting on his blanket sewing a strap on his haversack. I think she ought to be here to do it."

His reputation, gained among the mountains of Mexico, was doubtless one of the motives which ruled when he was assigned to duty among the mountains of Western Virginia; but even his abilities were not equal to conquering the conditions which he found prevailing there. Three small forces were occupying this region on behalf of the South, each dignified by the title of an army. But the generals would not take orders from each other, and two of them were bitterly hostile. When Lee arrived he found one army posted on the crest of a mountain and the other at its base, and though the enemy was close at hand, neither general would yield to the other. Lee considered the position selected by General Wise on the crest as the better of the two, and united the two forces there.

But the quarrel between the two generals could not be made up, and as General Floyd ranked Wise, the latter had to be relieved and transferred elsewhere. Old soldiers who have discussed the causes of the result of this campaign have never given wholly satisfactory reasons for it, but have felt assured that all that could have been accomplished Lee accomplished. They have felt that in the first place the dissensions of the officers previously in command had tended to demoralize the troops; then, that the sickness among the troops, unaccustomed to the exposure or prostrated by an epidemic of typhoid fever, measles, and other diseases, impaired their efficiency, and finally, that the unlooked-for hostility of the population at large in a region where it was difficult at best to maintain lines of communication, now, in a season unprecedentedly wet, which rendered the roads impassable, combined with lack of means of transportation to frustrate the plans of even so capable a commander as Lee. Lee himself referred to it later as "a forlorn hope." On September 1, Lee writes Mrs. Lee, giving a hint of his difficulties: "We have had a great deal of sickness among the soldiers, and those now on the sick list would form an army. The measles is still among them, but I hope is dying out. The constant cold rains, mud, etc., with no shelter or tents, have aggravated it. All these drawbacks, with impassable roads, have paralyzed our efforts."

Lee's report makes mention of the difficulty of maintaining his lines of communication, owing to the exhausted condition of his horses and the impossibility of obtaining supplies; so it may be assumed that this

was in his view the chief reason for the failure of the campaign.

The first object of Lee's offensive operations was the destruction of Reynolds, posted in a strong position on the summit of Cheat Mountain, commanding the pass and the important roads which led from the west to the Valley of Virginia. The latter's force was estimated in all at about 10,000 men, while Lee had about 6,000. It was necessary to dislodge him, and as his position at the pass was too well fortified to be assaulted in front, Lee determined, after a personal reconnoissance, to dislodge him by crossing the mountain and attacking him in the rear. Dispositions were accordingly made for this purpose. A body of troops were crossed over the mountain by a trail which had been discovered. The movement, however, proved a failure, because the attack on the fortified position on Cheat Mountain, which was to be the signal for the assault intended to be made by the body of troops sent by night across the mountains to attack Reynolds's position in the rear, was not made as ordered by Lee. And the flanking force, having had their ammunition damaged and their provisions destroyed by a furious storm, which raged all night, missing the concerted signal, returned across the mountains without making the expected assault. If any one else was to blame for this failure to carry out Lee's well-conceived plan, the commander, bitterly disappointed as he was, with the magnanimity characteristic of him, simply passed it by, as he later did similar failures on the part of his subordinates, assuming himself whatever blame attached to the failure. In

a letter to Mrs. Lee, dated Valley Mountain, September 17, 1861, the general expressed his disappointment: "I had hoped to have surprised the enemy's works on the morning of the 12th, both at Cheat Mountain and on Valley River. All the attacking parties with great labor had reached their destination, over mountains considered impassable to bodies of troops, notwithstanding the heavy storm that had set in the day before and raged all night, in which they had to stand till daylight; their arms were then unserviceable and they in poor condition for a fierce assault. After waiting till ten o'clock for the assault on Cheat Mountain, which did not take place, and which was to be the signal for the rest, they were withdrawn, and after waiting three days in front of the enemy, hoping he would come out of his trenches, we returned to our position at this place. I cannot tell you my regret and mortification at the untoward events that caused the failure of the plan. I had taken every precaution to insure success, and counted on it; but the Ruler of the universe willed otherwise, and sent the storm to disconcert the well-laid plan. We are no worse off now than before, except the disclosure of our plan, against which they will guard. We met with one heavy loss which grieves me deeply: Colonel Washington accompanied Fitzhugh [his son] on a reconnoitring expedition. I fear they were carried away by their zeal and approached within the enemy's pickets. The first they knew there was a volley from a concealed party within a few yards of them. Three balls passed through the Colonel's body, three struck his horse, and the horse of one of

the men was killed. Fitzhugh mounted the colonel's horse and brought him off. I am much grieved. He was always anxious to go on these expeditions. This was the first day I assented. Since I had been thrown in such immediate relations with him, I had learned to appreciate him very highly. Morning and evening have I seen him on his knees praying to his Maker. 'The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; the merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous are taken away from the evil to come.' May God have mercy on us all."

And again on the 26th of the same month he writes from his camp on Sewell Mountain: "I told you of the death of Colonel Washington. I grieve for his loss, though I trust him to the mercy of our heavenly Father. It is raining heavily. The men are all exposed on the mountains, with the enemy opposite to us. We are without tents, and for two nights I have lain buttoned up in my overcoat. To-day my tent came up, and I am in it, yet I fear I shall not sleep for thinking of the poor men. I have no doubt the socks you mentioned will be very acceptable to the men here and elsewhere. If you can send them here I will distribute to the most needy."

In a private letter to Governor Letcher, dated September 17, 1861, he makes no mention of his personal disappointment; that was for his wife alone. He simply states that "he was sanguine of success in attacking the enemy's works on Rich Mountain"; that "the troops intended for the surprise had reached their destination, having traversed twenty miles of

steep and rugged mountain paths, and the last day through a terrible storm, which had lasted all night, in which they had to stand, drenched to the skin, in a cold rain"; that he "waited for an attack on Cheat Mountain, which was to be the signal, till 10 A. M., but the signal did not come. The chance for surprise was gone. The provisions of the men had been destroyed the preceding day by the storm. They had nothing to eat that morning, and could not hold out another day, and were obliged to be withdrawn. This, Governor," he writes, "is for your own eye. Please do not speak of it; we must try again. Our greatest loss is the death of my dear friend, Colonel Washington. He and my son were reconnoitring the front of the enemy. They came afterward upon a concealed party, who fired upon them within twenty yards, and the Colonel fell, pierced by three balls. My son's horse received three shots, but he escaped on the Colonel's horse. His zeal for the cause to which he had devoted himself carried him too far."

The second opportunity which apparently offered itself and was allowed by Lee to pass fruitlessly by was when Rosecrans's army, which lay before him at Sewell Mountain, was allowed to slip away unmolested.

Reynolds having refused to be drawn out of his position, Lee turned his attention to the western section in the hope of destroying Rosecrans, and leaving General H. R. Jackson to hold Reynolds if possible, Lee addressed himself to the situation in the Kanawha Valley. Riding through the mountains, "attended by a single subaltern," he visited the commands of Generals Floyd

and Wise, whose rivalries threatened the destruction of both commands. His object was to put an end to their strife, bring them together, and get from their united forces the power to crush Rosecrans, who was stronger than either. Nothing could be in greater contrast than the long, heated letters of the two subordinates, and the brief, calm replies of the trained, equable-tempered, well-poised Lee.

Rosecrans lay on top of Sewell Mountain, in a strongly fortified position, and Lee posted himself on the opposite crest, expecting that Rosecrans would attack him. Rosecrans, however, after threatening to attack, suddenly withdrew his army by night. Lee gave as his reason for his apparent non-action, that he was confident of defeating Rosecrans by a flanking movement which he had planned for the following night, and that he "could not afford to sacrifice five or six hundred of his people to silence public clamor." In a letter to his wife, dated October 7, from Sewell Mountain, Lee gives an insight into his views, and incidentally touches on the part that politics was playing in the Southern army. He says: "The enemy was threatening an attack, which was continued till Saturday night, when, under cover of darkness and our usual mountain mist, he suddenly withdrew. Your letter, with the socks, was handed to me when I was preparing to follow. I could not at the time attend to either, but I have since; and as I found Perry [his colored servant from Arlington] in desperate need, I bestowed a couple of pairs on him as a present from you; the others I have put in my trunk, and suppose they will fall to the lot of Mere-

dith [a colored servant from the White House], into the state of whose hose I have not yet inquired. Should any sick man require them first he shall have them, but Meredith will have no one near to supply him but me, and will naturally expect that attention. The water is almost as bad here as in the mountains I left. There was a drenching rain yesterday, and as I left my overcoat in camp, I was thoroughly wet from head to foot. It has been raining ever since, and is now coming down with a will; but I have my clothes out on the bushes, and they will be well washed. The force of the enemy, estimated by prisoners captured, is put down at from 17,000 to 20,000—General Floyd thinks 18,000. I do not think it exceeds 9,000 or 10,000, but it exceeds ours. I wish he had attacked, as I believe he would have been repulsed with great loss. The rumbling of his wheels, etc., were heard by our pickets; but as that was customary at night in moving and placing his cannon, the officer of the day, to whom it was reported, paid no particular attention to it, supposing it to be a preparation for an attack in the morning. When day appeared the bird had flown, and the misfortune was that the reduced condition of our horses for want of provender, exposure to cold rains in these mountains, and want of provisions for the men prevented the vigorous pursuit of following up that had been prepared. We can only get up provisions from day to day, which paralyzes our operations. I am sorry, as you say, that the movements of the armies cannot keep pace with the expectations of the editors of papers. I know they can regulate mat-

ters satisfactory to themselves on paper. I wish they could do so in the field. No one wishes them more success than I do, and would be happy to see them have full swing. General Floyd has three editors on his staff. I hope something will be done to please them."

When it was all over in Western Virginia, one of his officers, who had been with him there (General Starke), asked Lee why he had not fought Rosecrans, as the forces were about equal, and the Confederates were ready and anxious for a fight, and felt certain of a victory. Lee's reply was that while his men were in good spirits, and would doubtless have done their duty, a battle then would have been without substantial results, owing to their being seventy miles from the railroad, their base of supplies, with the ordinary roads almost impassable, and that "if he had fought and won the battle and Rosecrans had retreated, he would have been compelled to fall back at last to the source of supplies."

"But," said General Starke, "your reputation was suffering, the press was denouncing you, your own State was losing confidence in you, and the army needed a victory to add to its enthusiasm."

To this Lee replied, with a smile: "I could not afford to sacrifice the lives of five or six hundred of my people to silence public clamor."

The "public clamor" over Lee's failure was bitter and persistent, but he remained unruffled by it. With characteristic calm he simply stated that it was "only natural that such hasty conclusions should be reached," and gave his opinion that it was "better not to attempt

a justification or defence, but to go steadily on in the discharge of our duty to the best of our ability, leaving all else to the calmer judgment of the future, and to a kind Providence." Long afterward, Mr. Davis wrote how, when "Lee was unjustly criticised for that campaign," he "magnanimously declined to make an official report, which would have exonerated himself by throwing the responsibility of the failure upon others."[1] This would have been alien to Lee's nature. All through the war he assumed the responsibility, even when, as at Gettysburg, his orders were not carried out, and the failure was manifestly due to others. He had no editors on his staff. Indeed, at this period he had only two aides-de-camp, Colonel Washington and Colonel Taylor, of whom the former was, as has been stated, killed in a reconnoissance on Cheat Mountain. Thus fell the last of the name who owned Mount Vernon.

The first campaign in which Lee engaged was thus, like Washington's first campaign, conducted with adverse fortune. Had Washington's military career closed after the retreat from Long Island, he would have been reckoned simply a brave man and a stark fighter, but one unequal to general command. Had Lee's career ended after the campaign in Western Virginia, when he was derisively characterized in the anti-administration press of Richmond as "Evacuating Lee," he would have been known in history only as a fine organizer, a capital scout, and a brilliant engineer of unusual gallantry whose abilities as a commander

[1] Taylor's "Lee," p. 47.

were not superior to those of the mediocre officer who opposed him in that experimental campaign, and were possibly equal only to the command of a brigade or, at best, of a division. But the South and fame awaited his opportunity.

Happily for the South, Mr. Davis knew Lee better than those who were so clamorous against him, and the autumn having closed the campaign in Western Virginia, and the sea cities along the Atlantic coast sorely needing protection from the blockading fleet, Lee was despatched to the South to design and construct a general system of coast-defences along the Atlantic seaboard. It must have irked him, with his clear vision of the outlook, to have been relegated for months to the seacoast of the Carolinas to work among the bayous and swamps—making bricks without straw—while the enemy not only swept the South-west, but got together a great army to move on Richmond. But though he spoke privately of it as "another forlorn hope like that in Western Virginia," no hint to the outside world escaped him. He was doing his duty. And whatever he may have thought of the task, it was one in which he displayed such genius that he rendered the coast cities of Georgia and South Carolina impregnable against all assaults by sea. Protected by his chain of forts, they stood as memorials of his genius until Sherman, with his victorious army, attacked them by land.

"It must be admitted," says Fitz Lee, in his "Life of Lee," "that General Lee retired from Western Virginia with diminished military reputation." This is far from a complete statement of the feeling as to him at this

time. He was charged with incompetence, with being "too tender to shed blood," and with "impressing with a showy presence" and "an historic name" rather than with soldierly qualities. When he was assigned to duty in the South, a protest was made against his being sent there. Mr. Davis felt it necessary to write to the Governor of South Carolina, defending his assignment. He declared: "If General Lee is not a general, I have none to send you." To all of this Lee made no reply. He simply proceeded with his duty, and amid the swamps of South Carolina and Georgia, labored for four months with a zeal which could not have been excelled had he commanded an army.

The Hon. Alexander H. Stephens gives a picture of Lee at this time. He says:

"The Confederate Government had adopted the plan of Austria, at the period when Napoleon the First so nearly wiped her off the map of Europe, and endeavored to 'cover everything' with the armies. The army at Centreville was little more than a mob clamoring for leave of absence, and with seldom a day's rations ahead, and General Lee was sent to repair the disasters of Hilton Head and Beaufort, S. C., by the impossible task of engineering sufficient fortifications for a thousand miles of mingled sea-coast and inland swamps. I remember seeing him in Savannah, conspicuous by the blue uniform which he was the last of the Confederates to put off, scarcely noticed among the gray uniforms of the new volunteers, and the least likely of all men to become the first character in the war for States Rights."

His letters give a clear picture of the difficulties of protecting these seaport towns against a navy without some sort of navy to oppose it. On February 8, 1862, he writes his wife from Savannah: "I wrote you the day I left Coosawhatchie. I have been here ever since, endeavoring to push forward the works for the defence of the city. Guns are scarce, as well as ammunition. I shall have to bring up batteries from the coast, I fear, to provide for this city. Our enemies are trying to work their way through the creeks and soft marshes along the interior of the coast, which communicate with the sounds and sea, through which the Savannah flows, and thus avoid the entrance to the river, commanded by Fort Pulaski. Their boats require only seven feet of water to float them, and the tide rises seven feet, so that at high water they can work their way and rest on the mud at low. I hope, however, we shall be able to stop them, and my daily prayer to the Giver of all victory is to enable us to do so. We must make up our minds to meet with reverses and overcome them. But the contest must be long, and the whole country has to go through much suffering. It is necessary we should be humble and taught to be less boastful, less selfish, and more devoted to right and justice to all the world."

And again from the same place he says, on February 23: "The news from Tennessee and North Carolina is not at all cheering. Disasters seem to be thickening around us. It calls for renewed energies and redoubled strength on our part. I fear our soldiers have not realized the necessity of endurance and labor, and that

it is better to sacrifice themselves for our cause. God, I hope, will shield us and give us success. I hear the enemy is progressing slowly in his designs. His gunboats are pushing up all the creeks and marshes to the Savannah, and have obtained a position so near the river as to shell the steamers navigating it. I am engaged in constructing a line of defence at Fort Jackson, which, if time permits, and guns can be obtained, I hope will keep them out."

As McClellan prepared to move on Richmond with the great army which he had been organizing and equipping all winter, so threatening became the situation there, and so deep an impression had Lee's work in preparing the defences of the Southern States made on the people, that they began to look to him once more, and later the Confederate Congress passed an act creating the office of commander-in-chief for him. This act President Davis vetoed as unconstitutional, he, himself, by the constitution, being the commander-in-chief of the naval and military forces of the Confederate States. He, however, recalled Lee to Richmond, and on March 13, 1862, issued the following order:

"General Robert E. Lee is assigned to duty at the seat of government, and, under the direction of the President, is charged with the conduct of the military operations in the armies of the Confederacy."

Mr. Stephens's comment on this is that "again he had a barren though difficult honor thrust upon him."

Mr. Davis, on the other hand, declared that when General Lee took command of the Army of Northern

Virginia, he was in command of all the armies of the Confederate States by his order of assignment, and that Lee continued in this general command of the Army of Northern Virginia as long as he would resist Lee's opinion that it was necessary for him to be relieved of one of these two duties. But it is manifest that Lee was "under the direction of the President."

Mr. Stephens states that he did much to improve the army as chief of staff under Mr. Davis, and was nominally head of the army, but soon asked to be relieved from responsibility with no power. During this period, however, his great engineering abilities were exercised to prepare the defences of Richmond against the coming storm. And among other benefits that the Confederate capital now derived from his labors were the works at Drewry's and Chaffin's Bluffs, on the James, to which were due, not long afterward, the repulse of the Federal gunboats, and the preservation of the city when, on Johnston's retiring up the Peninsula in May, Norfolk was abandoned, and the James was thrown open to the Federal fleet. But for this work of Lee's, Richmond might have become untenable before McClellan crossed the Chickahominy.

Thus Lee, in the shadow of the vast preparations making at Washington for a great invasion of Virginia, was, in March, 1862, called back to Richmond, to advise the President of the Confederacy. The need was urgent, for a few weeks later McClellan, with Johnston falling back slowly before him, was marching steadily up the Peninsula, with an army the like of which had never been commanded by one man.

As soon as Lee was brought back from the South, he revolutionized the plan of campaign hitherto followed. The South was already being shut in and throttled. Her sea-coast cities were being captured, her ports blockaded, and her country cut in two. His clear vision saw the imperative necessity of substituting an aggressive for a defensive policy, and he unleashed the eager Jackson on the armies in the Valley of Virginia, keeping them fully occupied, and so alarming Washington as to hold McDowell on the north side of the Rappahannock and withhold his 40,000 men from swelling McClellan's already powerful army on the Peninsula. Within a month after he was placed in actual command he perfected his plans and fell upon McClellan, and defeated the greatest army that had ever stood on American soil. The next three years proved beyond cavil that in the first campaign, as always, all that could have been done with his forces by any one was done by Lee. Within one year, indeed, he had laid the foundation of a fame as a great captain as enduring as Marlborough's or Wellington's.

Three years from this time "this colonel of cavalry" surrendered a muster-roll of 26,000 men, of which barely 8,000 muskets showed up, to an army of over 130,000 men, commanded by the most determined and able general that the North had found, and, defeated, sheathed his sword with what will undoubtedly become the reputation of the first captain and the noblest public character of his time.

In this period he had fought three of the greatest campaigns in all the history of war, and had destroyed

the reputation of more generals than any captain had ever done in the same space of time. His last campaign alone, even ending as it did in defeat, would have sufficed to fix him forever as a star of the first magnitude in the constellation of great captains. Though he succumbed at last to the "policy of attrition," pursued by his patient and able antagonist, it was not until Grant had lost in the campaign over 124,000 men, better armed and equipped—two men for every one that Lee had had in his army from the beginning of the campaign.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SITUATION WHEN LEE TOOK COMMAND

When McClellan moved on Richmond, the fortunes of the South appeared to be at a lower ebb than they ever were again until the winter of 1864. The long period since the victory of Manassas had been allowed to pass without any such active operations as would keep at white heat the flame of enthusiasm which preceded that event. The government of the Confederacy held to the doctrine that the war was one solely defensive. With even more disastrous reasoning, if possible, it put in practice another theory, that a democratic army should elect its officers. In the spring of 1862, a general election was, by direction of the government, held by the Confederate army, then lying in the face of the enemy, by which all officers from colonel down were voted for by the men of the various commands. Such a measure was wholly destructive of discipline, and Lee, in one of his letters, refers to being in the midst of "the fermentation" due to the reorganization of the army.

The general plan for prosecution of the war on the part of the North was the same that had been laid down at the beginning: that is, to hold the border States, to blockade the Southern ports and attack by sea, and to seize the navigable rivers running far

up into her territory, especially the Mississippi, and thereby cut the South in two. By the end of spring, 1862, nearly the whole of this far-reaching and sagacious plan had been measurably accomplished. Maryland, Missouri, and Kentucky had been held firmly, and in all three States, except Missouri, secession had been forcibly prevented, while Missouri had been substantially conquered.

The possession of a fleet gave to the Union forces the command of the Chesapeake, of the Potomac, of the York, and (after the sinking of the *Merrimac* by her commander) of the James, to within less than half a day's march of Richmond. This was quickly followed by an attempt on Richmond by the Federal fleet, which General Johnston declared a greater danger than the Federal army. The fleet, under Commodore John Rodgers, consisting of the *Monitor*, the *Galena*, and three other gunboats, ascended the James to within eight miles of Richmond, but were, on May 15, repulsed by the batteries at Drewry's Bluff, where Lee had hastily constructed works which stood till abandoned, on April 2, 1865.

In January, Thomas had won the battle of Mill Springs, in Kentucky, which made the Union forces dominant in that region. In February (6th), Fort Henry, on the Tennessee, had been captured, and four days later (the 10th) Fort Donelson, on the Cumberland, had surrendered unconditionally to a general hitherto almost unknown, to whom the government had been inclined to turn the cold shoulder, but who was to become better known thereafter. The gallant

Buckner, having refused to escape with the other generals and leave his men, had surrendered with the latter. By these victories the upper Mississippi, the Cumberland, and the Tennessee came into the control of the Federal forces, and all that was needed was to obtain mastery of the lower Mississippi to leave the Confederacy rent in twain. The forts at Hatteras Inlet had been reduced in August (28th). Hilton Head and Beaufort, in North Carolina, had been captured, following Admiral DuPont's reduction of the forts on Port Royal Inlet, and Roanoke Island and Newberne, N. C., had been captured in the first half of March, 1862. On April 6, Albert Sidney Johnston, deemed up till now the South's most brilliant soldier, had substantially won a battle against the captor of Forts Henry and Donelson, but had been slain in the hour of victory, and that night Buell, having reached the field with fresh troops, the Confederate forces had been in turn defeated. It is probable that but for the fall of Johnston, who bled to death through neglecting his wound in his eagerness to push his victory on the 6th, Grant's fortunate star might have set at Shiloh instead of rising higher and higher in the next three years, to reach its zenith at Appomattox. As it was, the upper Mississippi with its great tributaries was in complete control of the Union, and on April 24, Flag Officer Farragut, himself a Tennessean, with a powerful fleet ran up the Mississippi, successfully passing the forts (Jackson and St. Philip) guarding its mouth, and reached New Orleans, which city was soon occupied by Butler (May 1), its fall being quickly followed by the fall of

Pensacola. By this time all the important Florida seaport towns were in the possession of the Federal forces, and all these captures, except Roanoke Island and Newberne, had been effected by the navy.[1] Thus, the Mississippi was open from its mouth to Port Hudson, and even that fort and the yet more threatening forts at Vicksburg could be passed by the Federal gunboats, though not without danger, which it was important to put an end to. The main object of attack, however, now was Richmond.

The very next day after the rout at Bull Run, Mr. Lincoln, awakening to the gravity of the situation, had called for 500,000 men, and the North had responded with fervor. Between the 4th of August and the 10th of October more than 110 regiments and 30 battalions, comprising at least 112,000 men, were added to the forces in Washington and its neighborhood.[2] The ablest organizer in the army had been called to the task of organization, and proved to have a genius for it. All autumn and winter he labored at the work, and when spring came Washington had been strongly fortified, and McClellan found himself at the head of possibly the largest, best equipped, and best drilled army ever commanded by one man in modern times.

Thus, the spring of 1862 had been spent by the government of the United States in preparation for a campaign against Richmond which should retrieve the errors and disasters of the preceding year, and by making certain the capture of Richmond, "the heart

[1] Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," I, pp. 182–5.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 167.

of the Confederacy," should end the war by one great and decisive stroke. The new Federal commander proved in the sequel not to be as great a fighter as, at least, one of his successors. But whatever the immediate result was, McClellan taught the North the way to organize and equip a great army. It was well said that without McClellan there had been no Grant. And McClellan had difficulties to contend with in the panic-struck and urgent authorities in Washington which Grant was wise enough to relieve himself of by previous stipulation.

Several plans for attacking Richmond still presented themselves, as at the beginning of hostilities, all of which included the idea of cutting off the city from communication with the south-west. One was by way of the Shenandoah Valley, striking the Virginia Central Railroad at Staunton or Waynesboro, and marching on Richmond by way of Charlottesville, whence a railway line ran to South-west Virginia and Tennessee; one by way of Manassas; one by the Chesapeake Bay and the lower Rappahannock; and finally, one by way of the Chesapeake Bay and the peninsula lying between the York and the James, which presented the opportunity, under certain contingencies, of seizing Petersburg and isolating Richmond from the South.

The practicability of all of these plans of invasion had to be considered quite as carefully in Richmond as in Washington, and the possibility of each one of them being adopted had to be provided against. As the junction at Manassas had proved to be the key to the situation in the first effort, and its use had enabled the

valley forces under Joseph E. Johnston to be brought across the Blue Ridge in the nick of time for the final movement in the battle there, so it still remained the most important point in Central Virginia, and Johnston's army was placed there to guard it and at the same time keep Washington in a state of anxiety. The Washington authorities were, for manifest reasons, in favor of trying their fortune again at this point. The armies of Fremont and Banks in the Shenandoah Valley were within a few days' march and might render assistance, and at least it rendered Washington more secure. McClellan, however, favored the route by the Rappahannock. McClellan's first plan was to march to Annapolis, and then transport his army, 140,000 men, to Urbana, on the south bank of the Rappahannock, and "occupy Richmond before it could be strongly reinforced." [1]

This plan he was forbidden to adopt, though he considered it the best of all the plans, and he thereupon selected the route by way of Fortress Monroe and the Peninsula, against the views of the government authorities, who greatly desired him to adopt the overland route by Manassas, across which Johnston lay with an army then believed to number over 100,000 men, but really containing certainly less than half that number.[2] Indeed, it was actually about 35,000 men.

Illness during the autumn and early winter of 1861 prevented McClellan's acting with the efficiency which he might otherwise have shown; but even more disas-

[1] John C. Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," I, p. 266, citing McClellan's letter to Stanton (5 W. R., 45).

[2] *Ibid.*

trous than this was his determination not to move until he had an army sufficiently great and properly organized to make his success assured. For this reason mainly he resisted alike the importunities of the President and the Secretary of War and the clamor of the public until on toward the spring, by which time he had sacrificed the good-will of the former and the confidence of both.

Jackson, acting on a suggestion of Lee's, settled the question of the Shenandoah Valley plan by the battle of Winchester and his brilliant retreat between two converging armies down the valley, followed by the twin victories of Cross Keys and Port Republic. The authorities in Washington decided against the lower Rappahannock plan, and gave McClellan his choice between the overland route by way of Manassas and the Fortress Monroe plan, and he states that "of course he selected the latter," adding a jibe at the fears of the administration and a suggestion of their disloyalty to him.[1]

The advantages of the route by the Chesapeake Bay were obvious. The possession of the navy gave the Union Government command of the bay and its navigable tributaries, enabling them to transport troops and munitions of war to a point within a convenient distance of Richmond. The chief objections to the selection of this line lay, first, in the danger of denuding the defences of Washington by withdrawing so large a force while the Confederate army under Johnston lay on the Rapidan and the audacious Jackson was oper-

[1] "McClellan's Own Story," p. 227.

ating in the Shenandoah Valley, and, later on, in the difficulties occasioned by the operations in the Chesapeake of the new floating war machine, the *Virginia*, which, with her awkward armor of railway iron, appeared a sort of Goliath of the sea. The only other serious difficulties were the presence of the heavy fortifications at Yorktown and Gloucester Point, guarding the mouth of the York River. Still, McClellan had no doubt of being able, with the aid of the navy, to reduce these forts and open the York to the passage of his transports.

This decision was reached by him in the first week of March, and on the 9th of March Johnston, under orders from Mr. Davis, withdrew his army from Manassas and fell back to the Rappahannock, and thence toward Richmond, immediately on which McClellan occupied Manassas with the greater part of his army,[1] to give them training and with a view to opening the railway from Manassas, where Banks's head-quarters were to be, to Strasburg, in the Shenandoah Valley.

About the middle of March McClellan began to ship his troops to Fortress Monroe, a movement which proceeded so rapidly that by the end of the month he had three corps on the spot, and was "eagerly expecting others"; and Johnston thereupon, "his movements controlled by McClellan," marched to the Peninsula, where Magruder with only some 13,000 men at Yorktown had handled them so ably that McClellan was led to believe his force much larger than it was.

General Lee wrote to his wife from Richmond,

[1] Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," I, p. 225.

March 22, 1862: "Our enemies are pressing us everywhere, and our army is in the fermentation of reorganization. I pray that the great God may aid us, and am endeavoring by every means in my power to bring out the troops and hasten them to their destination." General Lee was now military adviser to the President, and thenceforth, though he was till almost the very end of the war "under the direction of the President," and never had a free hand, he had at least a potent hand in the conduct of the military operations of the Confederacy.

Having found his advance up the Peninsula between the York and the James, for the purpose of enveloping Yorktown, barred by the erection of strong works along the line of the Warwick River, extending entirely across the Peninsula, McClellan, instead of assaulting immediately, being under the impression that Magruder was far stronger than he really was, laid siege to Yorktown, and made ready with elaborate preparation to assault on the 5th of May. On the night of the 3d, however, Magruder, acting under the orders of Johnston, who, as stated, on McClellan's landing in Virginia had withdrawn his army from the Rapidan and now commanded in the Peninsula, skilfully withdrew his troops and retired on Williamsburg. So that McClellan, who had spent weeks in preparation for the capture, shipping heavy ordnance from the Northern arsenals and engaging the best engineers in the service, found the post abandoned, and got only the abandoned heavy guns which Magruder had been unable to carry off.

Differing from Johnston, Lee's temperament inclined

him to more audacious tactics than the Fabian policy which the latter inclined to pursue. He would have had Johnston force the issue on the Rapidan before giving McClellan the opportunity to mass his army on the Peninsula, and now that the latter event had occurred, he was in favor of forwarding troops and delivering battle before he should advance on Richmond.

The advance of McClellan on Richmond with an army of 115,000 men immediately under his command, besides the reserve of 40,000 under McDowell on the Rappahannock, made the Peninsula the field of the most important operations which had yet been attempted, and should they be successfully conducted, they were likely to decide the issue of the war. Opposed to him, under the immediate command of General Johnston, were about 53,000 men, with 18,000 at Norfolk commanded by General Huger, and something over 16,000 in the valley, making a total of 87,000 men.[1]

In this exigency, a conference was held in Richmond between the President, the Secretary of War, and General Lee, to which were also invited Major-Generals Smith and Longstreet, to discuss the best method of meeting the situation, whose gravity all recognized.

General Johnston proposed that, without attempting to make a stand on the lower Peninsula along Magruder's line, which would only delay the Federal army in its approach, all the available forces of the Confederacy, including those in the Carolinas and Georgia, with those at Norfolk, should be brought together for an attack on McClellan at the moment he began to be-

[1] Johnston's "Narrative," pp. 115, 116.

siege Richmond. He believed that such an attack, coming as a surprise to McClellan "would be almost certain to win, and the enemy, divided a hundred miles away from the Potomac, their place of refuge, could scarcely escape destruction. Such a victory, he urged, would decide not only the campaign, but the war, while the present plan could produce no decisive results."

This plan was opposed, the Secretary of War, General Randolph, who had been a naval officer, objecting because it involved "at least the temporary abandonment of Norfolk, which would involve the probable loss of the materials for many vessels of war contained in the navy yard there."

"Lee opposed it," states Johnston, "because he thought that the withdrawal from South Carolina and Georgia of any considerable number of troops would expose the important seaports of Charleston and Savannah to the danger of capture. He thought, too, that the Peninsula had excellent fields of battle for a small army contending with a great one, and that we should for that reason make the contest with McClellan's army there."

"Longstreet," adds Johnston, "owing to his deafness, took little part in the conference."

Longstreet, who states that he and General Smith were invited by General Johnston to accompany him, intimates that he heard quite enough at the conference; that he had a plan of his own, which he intended to suggest, by which he was to join General Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley "with sufficient reinforcements to strike the Federal forces in front of him a sudden,

severe blow," cross the Potomac, threaten Washington, and call McClellan to his own capital. This plan, he states, he had proposed to Jackson a few days before.

On prefacing his views, however, with the statement that he knew General McClellan, "that he was a military engineer, and would move his army by careful measurement and preparation, and that he would not be ready to advance before the 1st of May, the President interrupted and spoke of McClellan's high attainments and capacity in a style indicating that he did not care to hear any one talk who did not have the same appreciation of our great adversary." And he adds that, "remembering that McClellan had been a special favorite with Mr. Davis when he was Secretary of War in the Pierce administration, and Mr. Davis appearing to take such reflections upon his favorites as somewhat personal, he concluded that his opinion had only been asked through recognition of his presence, not that it was wanted, and said no more." [1]

Singularly enough, Longstreet makes no mention of General Lee's taking any part in the conference. The interesting fact, however, is established by General Long, that Lee was for fighting McClellan on the Peninsula, on one of "the excellent fields of battle for a small army contending with a great one." "The President," continues Johnston in his narrative, "decided in favor of the opinion of General Lee, and ordered General Johnston to take command of the Army of the Peninsula, adding the departments of Norfolk and the Peninsula to that of Northern Virginia."

[1] Longstreet's "From Manassas to Appomattox," p. 66.

General Johnston assumed his new command on the 17th of April, and proceeded to finish the works begun by Magruder along the line of the Warwick River.

Lee's views, however, were not adopted, and though Johnston had placed his army between McClellan and Richmond, the advance on the Confederate capital was steady and disheartening. A sharp battle was fought at Williamsburg, the ancient capital of the Old Dominion, in which, as very often occurred, both sides claimed the advantage; but if Napoleon's dictum be sound, that that side is to be deemed the victor which is able to advance first, the balance was in favor of the Union arms, even though they lost more men and five guns. The true advantage to the Confederates was that they were able, against McClellan's earnest efforts, to bring off the garrisons of the forts at the mouth of the York, extricate their trains, and retire leisurely up the Peninsula to the defensive position behind the Chickahominy, in the neighborhood of Richmond. The evacuation, however, of Yorktown and the withdrawal of Johnston's army necessitated the evacuation of Norfolk and Portsmouth.

The iron-clad *Virginia*—the old *Merrimac*, by which latter name she was, and doubtless will continue to be, better known—being unable to take the seas, partly because of her slow rate of speed, which prevented her passing the Federal batteries at the mouth of Hampton Roads, and yet more because of her inability to secure coal and other stores, and being unable because of her heavy draught to go up the James, was, on the 11th of May, sunk by her commander, Commodore Tatnall.

Thus, the James as well as the York was thenceforth open to the Federal gunboats and transports as far up as Drewry's Bluff, a high point commanding the narrows of the James, only seven or eight miles below Richmond.

Thus, as the spring closed while the fortunes of the South had waned lamentably in the South-west, the Confederate capital was menaced by an army which had forced its way up the Peninsula and was believed to be capable of taking Richmond whenever its general saw fit to deliver his assault. Feeling sure of it, McClellan approached leisurely up the north bank of the Chickahominy and entrenched his army in the positions he secured from time to time, until he was within sight of the spires of Richmond, and on quiet nights his pickets could hear the sound of the city's bells pealing the hours. It was believed by many that Richmond was doomed, and there was even discussion of moving the seat of government to a more secure capital in the South. The situation was grave, indeed. McDowell, with 40,000 men, was at Fredericksburg on the Rappahannock, but sixty miles away, and was under stringent orders to effect a junction with McClellan, who, to get in touch with him and protect his base at West Point on the York, had reached out on the north side of the Chickahominy as far as Hanover Court House and the North Anna. Two armies, one under Banks in the Valley of Virginia and the other under Fremont to the westward, were keeping Stonewall Jackson so fully engaged that he was making marches which gained for his infantry the appellation

of "foot cavalry," and to hold his own he was forced to win two battles on two successive days. It is no wonder that the Confederate authorities should have regarded the situation with deep concern—even Mr. Davis, habitually so sanguine, speaking of "the drooping cause of our country" [1]—and that the Union authorities should have been correspondingly elated. Richmond, apparently to the latter, lay almost at the mercy of the overwhelming army which McClellan had organized and brought to her gates. The only bright spot on the horizon was the Shenandoah Valley, where Stonewall Jackson, unleashed by Lee, was with his gallant little army showing amazing results, and by his "terrifying swiftness" and unexpected genius was keeping Washington in a panic, and withholding from McClellan's aid the forces under McDowell, Fremont, Milroy, Banks, and Shields, fully eight times the number of men in his own command. He recognized the necessity of making such a show of force in the Shenandoah Valley to the westward of Washington as would hold the Union forces there for the defence of Washington.

It had been the plan of McClellan to have McDowell join him on the Peninsula with his corps, which would have brought his force before Richmond up to some 150,000 men, and it had been the intention of the government at Washington to permit this plan to be carried out. They insisted, however, that McDowell, instead of going by water, should advance across coun-

[1] Letter to General Joseph E. Johnston, May 11, 1862. (Ropes, II, p. 114.)

try along the line of the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railway, and join McClellan in the lowlands of Hanover, thus keeping his forces in touch with Washington. The 26th of May was set for his advance; but on the afternoon of that very day, owing to Jackson's "rapid and terrifying movements" in the valley of the Shenandoah, this order was, to the "amazement and regret" of both McDowell and McClellan, "suspended," and McDowell was ordered to send 20,000 men directly to the Valley to aid in the capture of Jackson. The plan appeared feasible enough to civilians and office soldiers, but, as already stated, was frustrated by Jackson's brilliant extraction of his forces by his famous retreat from the Potomac to Strasburg, between the enemy's converging armies, and the subsequent victories of Cross Keys and Port Republic on June 8 and 9.

The retirement of the Confederate forces on Richmond had enabled McClellan to proceed up the York to West Point, where the Mattapony and the Pamunkey Rivers join, forming the York. Here he established his base of supplies, and by a singular coincidence he established his head-quarters at "The White House," a plantation belonging to General Lee. From this point he pushed his advance forward toward Richmond, occupying the country lying to the northward of Richmond, and throwing his left, consisting of the Third and Fourth Corps, under Heintzelman and Keyes, across the Chickahominy, a small, sluggish river that flows south-westerly into the James through a wide, marshy bottom, densely timbered, and often broken

into a number of channels. Uplands rise on both sides of the stream, and it is crossed only by the bridges on the roads to Richmond. The Fifth Corps remained on the northern side of the Chickahominy, guarding the line of communication with the York.

Thus, McClellan's forces were divided by a stream which, although apparently insignificant during dry weather, was, when swollen by rains, a factor to be seriously reckoned with.

In view of this division of his troops, Johnston had determined to attack him before any reinforcements could reach him from Fredericksburg, where McDowell lay with his 40,000 men, prepared to aid McClellan before Richmond, or Fremont in the valley of the Shenandoah, as need required.

It was a region to which both commanders had looked forward as a probable battle-ground—a generally level country, intersected by an occasional ravine or swamp, often heavily wooded, where some tributary creek had worn its way deep through the alluvial soil, spreading out in the bottoms with impenetrable thickets. But McClellan had not reckoned on the division of his army, which now left three of his corps (the Second, Fifth, and Sixth) on the north of the Chickahominy, while two (the Third and Fourth) were on the south of the stream. To meet this situation he took measures to establish partially a second base at Harrison's Landing, on the James, to which was due later on the preservation of his army.

Through this region three roads ran from Richmond eastwardly, and substantially parallel to the James,

known respectively as the Nine Mile Road, one fork of which ran to New Bridge, on the Chickahominy, the other to Fair Oaks Station, on the Richmond and York River Railroad; the Williamsburg Stage Road; and most southerly of all, the Charles City or River Road.

Johnston had, in face of McClellan's steady advance, and, as stated, somewhat against the views of Lee, fallen back on Richmond, and, finding McClellan's army divided by the swollen Chickahominy, had, on May 31, attacked his left under Keyes at Seven Pines, and driven him back to Fair Oaks, possibly missing a complete victory only by reason of Longstreet's slowness; then, having been severely wounded, he had been forced to leave the field, and next day a renewal of the attack under General G. W. Smith had resulted in a repulse. In this battle Longstreet was to have charge of the general management of the operations along the New Bridge Road, and was to be assisted by Huger from the Charles City Road. By some error, however, in the orders, which were verbal, or in the understanding of these orders—first, questions arose between the two commanders; and secondly, the orders were not complied with promptly. Longstreet, instead of attacking in the morning by the New Bridge Road, moved to the south-east on the Williamsburg Road, and did not attack until after one o'clock, when, instead of concentrating and destroying, as was expected, Keyes's corps, which was stationed somewhat perilously far in advance of Heintzelman's force, he only defeated it and drove it in, where it was saved by the opportune arrival of Sedgwick's division of Sumner's

corps, which had crossed the river at half-past two, and reaching the field at five o'clock, had attacked in flank. Hill's gallant and persistent attack in the early afternoon carried the field; but it was too late to avail of the golden opportunity that had offered at the beginning of the day, and though it was a victory, and the Confederates captured 10 guns, 6,000 muskets, and 5 colors, besides 347 prisoners,[1] it was not the decisive victory it should have been, and the enemy was ready to fight again the next morning.

On the eve of Seven Pines, Lee sent Colonel Long, of his staff, with a message to Johnston, "to tell him that he would be glad to participate in the battle." He had no desire to interfere with his command, but simply wished to aid him on the field to the best of his ability, and in any manner in which his services would be of most value. Johnston, thanking him, invited him to ride down to the battle-field, and asked that he send him such reinforcements as he could.[2]

General Johnston, in command of the operations, was, about sunset, shot out of his saddle and severely wounded, and the general command devolved upon General Gustavus W. Smith. The battle was renewed the following morning by General Smith, who ordered Longstreet "to renew the engagement and to direct his attack toward the north," where lay Richardson's "powerful division" of Sumner's corps, that had crossed the river to the rescue the afternoon before; but Longstreet seems to have believed that the entire Federal army was opposed to him, and to have been afraid

[1] Ropes, II, pp. 152, 154.

[2] Long's "Lee," p. 158.

of exposing his right flank to the troops of the Fourth Division, who still lay where they had been driven back the evening before. At any rate, he is charged by critics on both sides with having been "singularly lacking in energy and dash," and with "having made no serious effort to carry the Union lines."[1] Huger's brave brigades, under Armistead and Mahone, made a gallant attack, but were repulsed after hard fighting, and at two o'clock a new commander arrived on the field.

It was in this crisis that Lee was placed in command. Lee had ridden down to the battle-field with President Davis while the fight was in progress, and when the wounding of Johnston was reported to the President, he informed Lee that he wished him to take charge. The next day he issued the order, as follows:

RICHMOND, VA., *June* 1, 1862.

GENERAL R. E. LEE.

*Sir:* The unfortunate casualty which has deprived the army in front of Richmond of its immediate commander, General Johnston, renders it necessary to interfere temporarily with the duties to which you were assigned in connection with the general service, but only so far as to make you available for command in the field of a particular army. You will assume command of the army in Eastern Virginia, and in North Carolina, and give such orders as may be needful and proper.

Very respectfully,

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

[1] Ropes, II, p. 149.

Lee thereupon issued his first order to the gallant army with which his fame was thenceforth to be so inseparably bound up. It ran:

*Special Orders No. 22.*

HEAD-QUARTERS, RICHMOND, VA., *June* 1, 1862.

In pursuance of the orders of the President, General R. E. Lee assumes command of the armies of Eastern Virginia and North Carolina. The unfortunate casualty that has deprived the army in front of Richmond of the valuable services of its able general, is not more deeply deplored by any member of the command than by its present commander. He hopes his absence will be but temporary, and while he will endeavor to the best of his ability to perform his duties, he feels he will be totally inadequate to the task unless he shall receive the cordial support of every officer and man.

By order of General Lee.

W. H. TAYLOR,
*Assistant Adjutant-General.*

The situation at Richmond when, in succession to Johnston, Lee was appointed in command of the Army of Northern Virginia was substantially this: The Confederate troops, lying between Richmond and McClellan's army, numbered about 70,000 men. A steady retreat up the Peninsula had tended to impair their spirit, if not their morale. The single check given to McClellan at Williamsburg had resulted in nothing more practical than to allow time for the retirement on Richmond, and to teach McClellan a wholesome lesson of respect for his enemy. The attack at Seven Pines,

on the afternoon of May 31, had been so gallantly pressed that it had resulted in a victory, but not the complete victory that had been expected. Owing to Longstreet's slowness and, possibly, to his half-heartedness, which led him to wait until the afternoon before making the assault planned for the morning, thereby allowing Sumner to cross the falling Chickahominy and save Keyes, and on the next day led him to attack Sumner with only three brigades instead of with his full force, the victory of the 31st had been followed by the repulse at Fair Oaks next day, when General G. W. Smith commanded. In the same way, a few weeks later, as Henderson points out, he became responsible for the frontal battle of Malvern Hill.

It was characteristic of Lee that, although appointed to supersede General Smith on the 1st of June, he left him in actual command in the battle of that day, only endorsing his orders, and aiding him in bringing reinforcements from the commands of Ripley and Holmes.[1]

The fortunes of the Confederacy in the West and along the seaboard, as we have seen, were at this time at a low ebb, and McClellan was now apparently sure of the capture of the Confederate capital. Should it fall, Virginia was likely to be overrun by the forces of the Union, and the principal seat of war would be the South or the West. McClellan's army numbered about 110,000 men, now well organized and fairly seasoned; his equipment was as good as the world could furnish, and he believed himself, and was believed to be, a young Napoleon. McDowell's army, was at Fredericks-

[1] Fitz Lee's "Lee," p. 147.

burg, only sixty miles away, clamorous to join him and participate in the glory of the capture of the "rebel capital," and under orders to do so, while already, in the Shenandoah Valley, or ready to march thither, was Fremont with 20,000 men, all operating to unite and fall on Richmond.

Such, in brief, was the situation when Lee assumed command, on June 1, 1862, and the fate of Richmond was placed in his hands. His prestige at this time was far from being what it soon afterward became, or even what it had been previous to the outbreak of the war. His ability as an engineer was recognized; but the proof of a general is victories, and that proof he had not given.

## CHAPTER VII

### BATTLES AROUND RICHMOND

Lee, thus called from the titular position of military adviser to the President to the command of the army defending Richmond, to take the place of Johnston, found himself in command of about 80,000 men—70,000 of whom were close by.

Longstreet, who was given to being critical of Lee, as of many others, has an interesting account of Lee's action and the impression made by him when he first assumed command of the army which was to be thenceforth associated with his fame. The assignment of General Lee to the command was, he states, "far from reconciling the troops to the loss of their beloved chief, General Joseph E. Johnston, on whom all hearts leaned and whom all loved." "Lee's experience in active field work had been limited to his West Virginia campaign, which was not successful." His services as an engineer had been able and as an engineer he had been "especially distinguished." "But officers of the line," he adds, "are not apt to look to the staff in choosing leaders of soldiers, either in tactics or strategy."

"During the first week of his authority," he continues, "Lee called his general officers to meet him on the Nine Mile Road for a general talk. This novelty was not reassuring, as experience had told that secrecy in

war was an essential element of success; that public discussion and secrecy were incompatible."

They met, and the generals talked. But as they rode homeward, it came to them that Lee had "disclosed nothing," "and," says Longstreet, "all rode back to their camps little wiser than when they went, except that they found General Lee's object was to learn of the temper of those of his officers whom he did not know, and of the condition and tone among their troops." Surely no bad illustration of the new commander's wisdom!

One more personal touch follows. General Whiting was afraid of bayous and parallels, and complained of the sickness in his command on account of his position at Fair Oaks, and asked that his command be given a better position. "Whiting's Division was broken up," says Longstreet. "Three of his brigades were ordered to A. P. Hill's Division. He was permitted to choose two brigades that were to constitute his own command. Besides his own he selected Hood's Brigade. With these two he was ordered by way of Lynchburg to report to General Jackson in the valley district." Longstreet's thrust at Whiting throws unconsciously a ray on Lee. Whiting, however, was soon to come to Longstreet's relief on the hills above Beaver Dam Creek, and within the month, Hood's Texans were to "put on immortality" by being the first to pierce Fitz John Porter's blazing lines.

This was undoubtedly the same conference of which Mr. Davis speaks,[1] and at which he was present, having,

[1] "Rise and Fall of the Confederacy," vol. II, chap. XXIII.

as he rode by on his way out to the army, seen a number of horses at a house, among which he recognized General Lee's horse, and having joined the conference. "The tone of the conversation," he says, "was quite despondent, and one especially pointed out the inevitable consequence of the enemy's advance by throwing out bayous and constructing successive parallels." This must have been the same general whose division, as Longstreet states, was broken up, and here we have the reason for it.

Long supplements the account of this first meeting of Lee and his generals given by Longstreet. "The principal officers of the army were," he says, "present and were almost unanimous in the opinion that the line then occupied should be abandoned for one nearer Richmond, which was considered [by them] more defensible."

Lee, as reported by Longstreet, said nothing at the time; but Long states that he made a personal reconnoissance of the whole position and then, against this almost unanimous judgment of his generals, "declared his intention of holding it," and "ordered it to be immediately fortified in the most effective manner." [1] How effective it was the 26th and 27th of June were to show.

This meeting of Lee and his generals had something of the effect which Napoleon's first meeting with his generals in Italy had. From that moment the army felt a new hand and soon acknowledged its master. His first act was one which should dispel the delusion

[1] Long's "Robert E. Lee," pp. 163, 164.

that he was great only in defensive operations. It was, indeed, the height of audacity and the forerunner in a career in which audacity was possibly the chief element.

Massing his troops suddenly on the north side of the Chickahominy, and calling Stonewall Jackson from the valley to meet him at a given point at a given hour, he fell upon McClellan's entrenchments, crushed his right wing, and rolled him back to the upland plain of Malvern Hill. Was it on the defensive or the offensive that he acted when he conceived and carried through to supreme success those masterly tactics? Was he acting on the defensive or offensive when again, dashing upon him on the entrenched uplands of Malvern Hill, he swept him back to his gunboats and shattered at once his plans and his prestige? It was a battle fought as Grant fought at second Cold Harbor, mainly by frontal attack; and, like the plan of second Cold Harbor, has been criticised as costing needless waste of life. But, unlike Grant's futile and costly assaults, Malvern Hill, however bloody it was, proved successful. That night McClellan, his great army shattered and his prestige destroyed, retreated to the shelter of his gunboats. Lee's audacious tactics saved Richmond. It was not until nearly three years had passed, and until hundreds of thousands of lives had been spent, and the seed-corn of the Confederate South had been ground in the ever-grinding mills of war, that a Union picket ever again got a glimpse of the spires of Richmond, or any Union soldier, other than a prisoner of war, heard her church bells pealing in the quiet night.

It had long been plain to Lee's clear vision that the best defence of Virginia's capital was an offensive movement which should menace the Federal capital and compel the Washington government to hold for its defence the troops which otherwise would join McClellan, and as early as April 29 he had suggested to Stonewall Jackson, then operating in the Valley of Virginia, a threatening countermove to prevent, if possible, McDowell from crossing the Rappahannock and joining McClellan. This Jackson had promptly proceeded to do and had executed his famous double. Crossing the Blue Ridge, as if leaving the Valley of Virginia, then doubling back, he had marched on Milroy, and, defeating him at McDowell, had pursued him to Franklin, and had raised such a commotion in Washington that Banks, Fremont, and McDowell were all set on him by the panic-stricken authorities. Two weeks before the battle of Seven Pines Lee had again prompted Jackson to move on Banks and, if successful, drive him back toward the Potomac and create the impression that he intended to threaten that line, a movement in which Jackson was completely successful. Thus Lee had, with the aid of his able lieutenant, stopped the armies of Fremont and McDowell from any attempt to reinforce McClellan, and was ready when the moment came to carry out his far-reaching plan to defeat and possibly destroy by one swift blow McClellan's great army, now lying at the gates of Richmond and holding both sides of the Chickahominy.

It is no part of the plan of this book to discuss in detail Lee's consummate tactics; but a clear outline

of his far-seeing plan is necessary. McClellan's army, flushed with hope after the constant advance up the Peninsula, lay in a long shallow arc to the east and north of Richmond, extending from the vicinity of the James to the hills above Beaver Dam Creek—five fine army corps in all. Fitz John Porter's corps, his right wing, lay entrenched on these uplands on the north of the Chickahominy. Franklin's corps lay next to the Chickahominy on the south, Heintzelman on his left, resting on the broad morass of White Oak Swamp, with Keyes's corps behind them in reserve; and all were strongly entrenched.

Johnston had attacked on the south side of the Chickahominy and failed to dislodge McClellan. What would Lee do? His first act, as stated, was to overrule his generals' almost unanimous opinion to withdraw to the inner defence of Richmond. He retired his army only to the original position held before the assault at Seven Pines, and fortified on the south bank of the Chickahominy, to secure that side of the river against any advance from that direction while he prepared for his coup on the north bank against McClellan's right wing, commanded by the gallant Fitz John Porter. The line, as thus selected, ran from Chaffin's Bluff on the north bank of the James across to a point on the Chickahominy above New Bridge (crossing the River Road about four miles, and the other roads about five miles, from Richmond), thence up the south bank of the Chickahominy to Meadow Bridge at the crossing of the Virginia Central Railroad. Along this line lay the six divisions in which Lee's army was organized: Long-

street on the right, and next, in order, Huger, D. H. Hill, Magruder, Whiting, and A. P. Hill, the latter guarding the left of the Confederate position above the Chickahominy. Each general was made responsible for his line, and was ordered to construct defences in his front, which, manned by the Army of Northern Virginia, should withstand any assault.

At first there appears to have been much complaining of the labor which this entailed on the men, and one of the general officers—a man more noted for his courage than for his reticence—is said to have harangued his men on the disgrace of having to shelter themselves behind sand-bags and earthworks instead of being shown the enemy and led against him. In a short time, however, Lee's constant presence along the lines, his serene confidence and soldierly bearing are said to have restored the good temper and morale of the troops, and before long they began to look for his daily visits as he rode by inspecting the work. Even General Tombs, who had held in some contempt picks and spades, prepared fortifications of logs along his front.

Lee's military secretary notes, on the 3d of June, that the work "was in rapid progress all along the line. The men appeared in better spirits than the day before, and seemed to be interested in their work." And so on for many days. On June 6 he notes that "the troops are in good spirits, and their confidence in General Lee is rapidly increasing."

On June 16, General Lee, accompanied by Colonel Long, made a reconnoissance of the Federal position on the north side of the Chickahominy. "There was

then on that side of the line a Federal force of about 25,000 men, commanded by General Fitz John Porter. The main body of this force occupied a position near Mr. Gaines's house, and one division, five or six thousand strong, was posted at Mechanicsville. During this reconnoissance," continues Long, "General Lee turned to the writer and remarked: 'Now, Colonel Long, how can we get at those people?'"

"Fitz John Porter's position" appeared to him "sufficiently exposed to invite attack, and, the force at Fredericksburg having been withdrawn, General Lee determined to assume the aggressive. This determination, however, was communicated only to his military family until he had fully matured his plan of operation, which he then submitted to Mr. Davis in a personal interview."

Thus, though he had as his first move withdrawn his army even nearer Richmond than before, he had no idea of remaining there idle while McClellan prepared to dislodge him. On the 8th of June he outlined to the Secretary of War his plan that Jackson should be "prepared to act with the army near Richmond if called on," and on the 11th, having decided to send Stuart to feel around McClellan's right wing, he wrote Jackson of his plans for McClellan's destruction, as follows:

HEAD-QUARTERS, NEAR RICHMOND, *June* 11, 1862.

BRIGADIER-GENERAL THOMAS J. JACKSON, *Commanding the Valley District.*

*General:* Your recent successes have been the cause of the liveliest joy to this army, as well as to the country. The admiration caused by your skill and bold-

ness has been constantly mingled with solicitude for your situation. The practicability of reinforcing you has been the subject of earnest consideration. It has been determined to do so at the expense of weakening this army. Brigadier-General Lawton, with six regiments from Georgia, is on the way to you, and Brigadier-General Whiting, with eight veteran regiments, leaves here to-day. The object is to enable you to crush the forces opposed to you, then leave your unavailable troops to watch the country and guard the passes covered by your cavalry and artillery, and with your main body, including Ewell's Division and Lawton's and Whiting's command, move rapidly to Ashland by rail or otherwise, as you may find most advantageous, and sweep down between the Chickahominy and Pamunkey, cutting up the enemy's communications, while this army attacks General McClellan in front. He will thus, I think, be forced to come out of his entrenchments, where he is strongly posted on the Chickahominy and apparently prepared to move by gradual approaches on Richmond. Keep me advised of your movements, and, if practicable, precede your troops, that we may confer and arrange for simultaneous attack. I am, with great respect, your obedient servant.

R. E. Lee, *General.*

It was deemed important to ascertain how McClellan's line of communication with his base of supplies on the York River was protected. To secure accurate information Lee despatched General Stuart with a small force (about 1,200 cavalry and a battery of horse artillery)[1] to investigate around his right flank and make a reconnoissance in the direction of McClellan's

[1] Walter H. Taylor's "General Lee," p. 58.

line of communication, with his base at West Point. Stuart's brilliant performance of this task set a new mark for cavalry leaders the world over. Setting forth from Richmond on the 11th of June, he rode north, as if bound for the mountains, then, turning eastward, passed down through Hanover upon McClellan's right, driving before him a small body of cavalry which he found there and defeating an occupying force found at Old Church, some ten miles below Hanover Court House on the Virginia Central Railroad. In a small skirmish between the two places he lost the only man lost in the raid, the gallant Captain Latané, who was killed leading a charge against a troop of the enemy which attempted to bar the way. Passing on from Old Church he struck McClellan's line of communication, the York River Railroad, at Tunstall's Station, where he destroyed the railroad and took note of the indifferent measures adopted to guard the line. Then knowing that an overwhelming force had been sent out in his rear to cut off his retreat, he conceived the daring plan of pushing onward and making a dash around McClellan's entire army.

Accordingly, turning southward, he headed straight for the Chickahominy, in McClellan's rear. Finding that the bridge on which he had expected to cross had been washed away, he tore down an old building near by and utilizing the remaining timbers of the old bridge, constructed a bridge, swam his horses, crossed in the rear of McClellan, and after a hazardous and record-breaking march, riding night and day, reached the James, swept up its north bank beyond McClellan's

left, and reached Richmond with the information desired, having made a complete circuit of McClellan's army.

This achievement had several immediate consequences: It aroused a wide-spread distrust of McClellan; it possibly decided Lee to change his first plan to the one he finally adopted, of overwhelming McClellan's right and cutting him off from his base of supplies on the north; and it probably decided McClellan to establish a new base on the James. In any event, a few days later McClellan began to send transports, with all needed ammunition and supplies, to Harrison's Landing, on the James, to provide for a contingency which he had for some time been considering—the possibility of needing some other base than West Point.

McClellan, however, while contemplating establishing a base of supplies on the James, which he controlled, in preparation for some quick move, appears to have continued satisfied with his former disposition of his forces, by which he occupied both sides of the Chickahominy within eight miles of Richmond, except that he transferred the Second and Sixth Corps to the south side of that stream, leaving only the Fifth Corps on the north side. Here he fortified the approaches to his position on the uplands behind Beaver Dam Creek. He yet more heavily fortified the position on the south side of the Chickahominy, extending his powerful field works from a point known as Golding's Farm to White Oak Swamp, a boggy and thickly timbered bottom extending for several miles at an angle to the Chickahominy. He appears to have been obsessed

with the conviction that the enemy in front of him largely outnumbered him, and he constantly and urgently applied for reinforcements.

On the southern side, as we have seen, Jackson was instructed to strike a blow in the Shenandoah Valley which should startle Washington, and, while they were still dazed, to hasten and join Lee on the Chickahominy, and with his veterans act as Lee's left wing in a blow on McClellan's right which should drive him from before Richmond. To make sure of this, as well as to lull McClellan to a sense of security, several brigades were sent to Jackson; but time appeared so important to Lee that Jackson was summoned to leave his cavalry and a small force to watch the enemy and join him without waiting for a stroke in the valley. The day after Stuart returned from his raid, Jackson was told that the sooner he could come the better. Putting his troops in motion, the general rode ahead to Richmond to learn the details of Lee's plans, and then rode back to hurry forward his troops, already pushing on by forced marches toward the field where, by Lee's brilliant plan, the assault was to be delivered at dawn on the 26th by his combined forces.[1] This he felt sure would force McClellan out of his entrenchments, where he was strongly posted and apparently prepared to move by gradual approaches on Richmond.

It has been stated that his despatching of troops to the valley was done ostentatiously to deceive the enemy; but Lee's letter of the same date to the Secretary of War disposes of this idea. In it he states that

[1] Walter H. Taylor's "General Lee," p. 60.

it is very desirable and important that the acquisition of troops to the command of General T. J. Jackson should be kept secret, and with this in view he requests the secretary to use his influence with the Richmond newspapers to prevent any mention of the same in the public prints.

Moreover, when he decided that he would not wait longer for Jackson, and three days later ordered him to join him at once, he again impressed on him that, "to be efficacious, the movement must be secret." The effect, however, had been already gained, for on the 18th McClellan telegraphed the government at Washington that some 10,000 men had been sent to Jackson the same day that Jackson, doubling on his track with three divisions, "containing ten brigades, with eight batteries," perhaps 25,000 men in all, headed for the Chickahominy.

Jackson had already in the intervening time fought, on June 8 and 9, respectively, the victorious battles of Cross Keys and Port Republic, defeating Fremont and Shields, and struck new awe in the breast of the government at Washington. And so rapid and secret were his movements that while Mr. Lincoln and McClellan were exchanging telegrams relative to Jackson's reinforcements from Lee, he was already half way to Richmond. And when, on the 25th of June, Secretary Stanton, in reply to a despatch from McClellan, asking for the latest information about Jackson, telegraphed that he had heard that Jackson was at Gordonsville with 10,000 rebels, but that neither McDowell nor Banks nor Fremont had any knowledge of his move-

ments, Jackson was bivouacked at Ashland, but a few hours from the field of Gaines's Mill.

Lee's first plan appears to have been to bring Jackson down from the valley and fling him upon McClellan's right, and at the same time with such turning movement attack McClellan in front, somewhat as had been done at Seven Pines. But this plan was subsequently abandoned for one by which Jackson was, as we have seen, still to attack McClellan's right, as previously proposed, and Lee was to cross to the north of the Chickahominy and unite with him in first destroying McClellan's right wing and then in falling upon his main body in the retreat down the Peninsula, which he felt sure he would compel.[1] Longstreet asserts that he suggested this movement to Lee; but the fact is questioned by most authorities and denied by some, and the claim, in face of Lee's silence and of other incontrovertible facts, appears untenable. The chief danger, and a grave one, in this plan was that McClellan, if he learned of the intended removal from his front of Lee's main body, might suddenly assume the offensive and, carrying the depleted works in his front by a sudden assault, seize Richmond.

The matter resolved itself, finally, into a decision based on the character of the two generals. Lee's plan was the height of audacity; but he decided upon it and carried it through with unwavering resolution to a brilliant conclusion. McClellan did, indeed, on learning through his secret-service agents and an occasional deserter that Jackson was on his way to join in an at-

[1] Ropes, II, p. 165.

tack on him, take steps to assume the offensive. He directed General Porter to make provision to guard his right flank (June 23), and spoke of "the decisive movement" to be made to "determine the fate of Richmond." [1] He sent General Casey to the White House to protect his base of supplies and his line of communication therewith. He ordered Heintzelman to advance his pickets on the Williamsburg Road, in the direction of Richmond, and so satisfied was he with his progress that he telegraphed to Washington to announce the success of the movement.

At this time, however, Jackson, almost at the end of his long march, was drawing near Ashland, and Lee was writing his battle order, which was to roll up McClellan's right wing beyond the Chickahominy and send it across the stream by night, shattered and disheartened. In this movement of McClellan's a severe fight took place between Hooker, on the one side, supported by Kearny on the left and Richardson, of Sumner's corps, on the right, and Armistead and Wright, of Huger's Division, on the Southern side, reinforced later by Mahone and Ransom. The fight lasted until night, and the losses on either side were between four and five hundred men. That night the Federals fell back to their old positions. With this affair, says Allan, "McClellan's opportunity of delivering battle on his own terms passed away." [2]

Lee, who up to this time had held his forces in hand on the south side of the Chickahominy, now, as the Federals retired, moved Longstreet and D. H. Hill over

[1] Allan, p. 136. Ropes, II, p. 169.
[2] Allan's "Army of Northern Virginia," pp. 74, 75.

toward the Chickahominy to be ready to cross near Mechanicsville and join in the attack on Porter next day. His plan was to leave 30,000 men to hold McClellan's main body of 70,000 men and with 50,000 fall on his right wing, numbering only some 35,000 men.

Lee's specific battle order was issued on the 24th, and is given in full (in Appendix A) for the benefit of those who wish to study his first battle order.

Had these orders been carried out exactly, there is no doubt that Porter would have been flanked and forced out of his position without the frightful cost of A. P. Hill's deadly assaults on the heights above Beaver Dam and Powhite Creeks. With Jackson up, Lee's army numbered about 80,000 men.[1] His plan briefly was for Jackson, with his veterans, to advance before daylight on June 26, with Stuart on his left, and turn the long right wing of McClellan's army, under Porter, posted at Mechanicsville in a strong position, commanding the turnpike and bridge across the Chickahominy, with Beaver Dam Creek and its upland behind it; for Branch's Brigade, facing Porter, to keep in touch with Jackson, and on his advance to cross the Chickahominy and rejoin his commander, A. P. Hill; for A. P. Hill, as soon as he knew Jackson was engaged, to cross the Chickahominy at the Meadow Bridge and uncover the crossing of the Chickahominy at the Mechanicsville Bridge; for Longstreet to cross to the support of A. P. Hill and for D. H. Hill to cross to the support of Jackson; and the front divisions moving together, with Jackson in advance, would sweep down the Chick-

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 69.

ahominy, drive Porter from his position above New Bridge, and pressing forward together toward the York River Railroad, close upon McClellan's rear and force him down the Chickahominy. Meanwhile Magruder and Huger were to hold the defences on the south side of the Chickahominy and keep McClellan's main army well occupied.

Lee's plan was the consummation of audacity, for it would leave only 30,000 men to confront and hold McClellan's left wing and centre on the south of the Chickahominy, while he assaulted his right wing on the north bank with his main army. Happily for Lee, McClellan was obsessed with the idea that the force opposite to him numbered at least 200,000 men. This idea had held him back hitherto. This idea held him back now. He neither reinforced Porter on the north bank of the river until the 27th, nor attacked Lee's front though it had been denuded to barely 30,000 men. The time fixed for the assault was based on Jackson's conviction that he could be up and ready to attack at daylight on the 26th of June. But for once in his life Jackson was not "up." He was to have been at the Slash Church, near Ashland, on the 25th, and was to bivouac near the Central Railway (now the Chesapeake and Ohio), ready to march at three o'clock on the morning of the 26th on the road to Pole Green Church to deliver the assault which was to be the signal to A. P. Hill to cross the Chickahominy. But it was not until four o'clock that afternoon that he was able to reach the neighborhood of the field of battle, where the fight had been raging for several hours, and even then

some three miles from the battle-field, about four in the afternoon, and, though the battle was thundering not far away, he went into bivouac, an act which has given rise to endless wonder and discussion.

It has always been a question among military students as to on whom rested the responsibility for the costly attack of the 26th of June on the formidable position above Beaver Dam Creek. Ropes places it on A. P. Hill, to whom he refers as "a daring and energetic but inconsiderate officer." Henderson declares that "the order of June 24, instructing Jackson to start from Slash Church at 3 A. M. on the 26th, and thus leading the other generals to believe that he would certainly be there, should never have been issued," and thus lays the responsibility on Lee. Allan states that Lee's original plan, by which Jackson was to turn McClellan's right wing, failed through Jackson's not being up. "The Confederate leader felt that his plan of operation must now be apparent to General McClellan," and that "with two-thirds of his army north of the Chickahominy, and but one-third holding the lines in front of the city against McClellan's main body, no time must be allowed his adversary to make new dispositions or to set forward a counter movement against Richmond. He, therefore, ordered A. P. Hill to make a direct attack on the Federal positions." [1] This inferentially seems to place the responsibility on Jackson. And to the same effect are the declarations of General Long and Colonel Taylor, both of whom were on Lee's staff and both of whom give the fear of McClellan's making a counter

[1] Allan's "Army of Northern Virginia," p. 80.

attack on Richmond as the reason for not delaying the attack till Jackson had come up on the flank. That night and next morning, however, McClellan, under protection of his artillery, retired his right wing to his second line above Powhite Creek, in a crescent fronting Gaines's Mill and Cold Harbor and covering his bridges. Lee, eager to secure the fruits of his strategy and crush McClellan's right wing, and apprehensive lest McClellan might, on finding his main army beyond the Chickahominy, overwhelm Magruder and Huger and march on Richmond, assumed personal direction of the field next day. As soon as it was discovered that Porter was withdrawing his troops from his position above Beaver Dam Creek, Lee ordered A. P. Hill to push forward in pursuit, and D. H. Hill to join Jackson to the left in an attack around Porter's right flank. Magruder and Huger, on the south side of the Chickahominy, were ordered to demonstrate against the forces in their front "to prevent, as far as possible, all movement on that side," and fully complied with their instructions. It was about noon when A. P. Hill came up with the rear guard of Porter's troops in front of the new Federal position above Powhite Creek.[1] This position, like his first, a high plateau above a stream which winds through a deep "bottom," was naturally a strong one, and was rendered almost unassailable by the conformation of the ground, protected by almost impassable swamps and by the abatis of felled trees beyond an open plain a quarter of a mile

[1] The account of these movements is taken partly from Henderson and partly from Allan's "Army of Northern Virginia."

wide, swept by a triple line of fire and commanded by heavy batteries on both sides of the Chickahominy. It was a desperate undertaking to drive such a force from such a position, but the need was great—Richmond hung in the balance. Lee promptly attacked again, Hill still leading the assault, and after terrific fighting, carried the breastworks, and forced Porter back to the river, across which he withdrew his shattered corps that night.

This battle is said by Allan to have been, perhaps, the most obstinately contested battle of the war, and as Lee's first great battle its details may be given. On finding that Porter had made a stand above Gaines's Mill, Hill's front brigade (Gregg's) was at once deployed and sent forward. The Federal skirmishers were driven in, and Gregg, descending into the deep valley, crossed the stream and formed in line on the east side preparatory to attacking the Federal lines on the face and crest of the ridge.[1] His other brigades, in order—Branch, J. R. Anderson, Field, and Archer—were rapidly moved up and formed in line with Gregg, with Pender in reserve. Here Hill waited, by Lee's orders, till he learned that Longstreet was coming up, lower down the creek, on his right, and then, the approach of Jackson and D. H. Hill being momentarily expected, Lee, who had assumed personal command of the field, gave the order; and about half-past two A. P. Hill let loose his lines, and they dashed forward against the Federal left and centre.

[1] Allan's "Army of Northern Virginia," p. 36. Official Records, series I, vol. XI, part II, p. 836.

The assault was one of the most intrepid made during the war, and it was met with equal intrepidity. Says A. P. Hill: "The incessant roar of musketry and the deep thunder of the artillery told that the whole force of the enemy was in my front. Branch becoming hard pressed, Pender was sent to his relief. Field and Archer were also doing their part as directed. . . . These two brigades, under their heroic leaders, moving across the open field, met the enemy behind an abatis and strong entrenchments at the base of a long, wooded hill, the enemy being in three lines on the side of this declivity, its crest falling off into a plateau, and this plateau studded with guns. . . . Desperate but unavailing attempts were made to force the enemy's position. The 14th South Carolina, Colonel McGowen, on the extreme left, made several daring charges. The 16th North Carolina, Colonel McElroy, and 22d, Lieutenant-Colonel Gray, at one time carried the crest of the hill, and were in the enemy's camp, but were driven back by overwhelming numbers. The 35th Georgia, Colonel Thomas, also drove through the enemy's lines like a wedge, but it was of no avail. Gregg and Branch fought with varying success, Gregg having before him the vaunted Zouaves and Sykes's regulars. Pender's Brigade was suffering heavily, but stubbornly held its own. Field and Archer met a withering storm of bullets, but pressed on to within a short distance of the enemy's works, but the storm was too fierce for such a handful of men. They recoiled and were again pressed to the charge, but with no better success. These brave men had done all that any brave soldiers could do.

Directing the men to lie down, the fight was continued and help awaited. From having been the attacking, I now became the attacked, but stubbornly, gallantly was the ground held. My division was thus engaged full two hours before assistance was received." [1]

Meanwhile Jackson, moving toward Cold Harbor, on finding the roads in his front obstructed and defended by sharp-shooters, had "gone back into the Bethesda Church Road. This threw him in the rear of D. H. Hill, and it was past midday when these commanders reached the vicinity of Cold Harbor." Here Jackson halted for something over an hour, while the sound of the battle rolled up from the direction of the Chickahominy. He says in his report that "soon after, General A. P. Hill became engaged, and being unacquainted with the ground and apprehensive, from what appeared to me to be the respective positions of the Confederate and Federal forces engaged, that if I then pressed forward, our troops would be mistaken for the enemy and fired into, and hoping that Generals A. P. Hill and Longstreet would soon drive the Federals toward me, I directed General D. H. Hill to move his division to the left of the road, so as to leave between him and the woods on the right of the road an open space, across which I hoped the enemy would be driven." [2]

This halt of Jackson's came near losing the day, and had McClellan sent Porter the reinforcements he

[1] A. P. Hill's report. Allan's "Army of Northern Virginia," p. 87: War Records, series I, vol. XI, part II, p. 836.

[2] *Ibid.*, series I, vol. XI, part II, p. 553.

urgently asked for, the error might not have been retrieved. "As on the previous day," says Henderson, "the Confederate attack had failed in combination. A. P. Hill had fought for two hours without assistance. Longstreet had then come in with Whiting. Jackson and D. H. Hill were still away. . . . A battery of D. H. Hill's Division was brought into action, but was soon silenced, and beyond this insignificant demonstration the Army of the Valley made no endeavor to join the battle. The brigades were halted by the roadside. Away to the right, above the intervening forest, rolled the roar of battle, the crash of shells and the din of musketry, but no orders were given for the advance." [1]

At length Jackson awoke to the imperative demand of the situation. According to Long, Lee sent several staff officers to him to bring him to the support of Hill and Longstreet. Others give him the credit of ordering his command forward when, judging from the sound and direction of the firing that the original plan had failed, he advanced to the attack. D. H. Hill, east of the Old Cold Harbor Road, was sent forward against the enemy's left flank. Ewell was on his right, with Lawton, Whiting, Winder, in order, still further to the right. The position which they attacked, like that in front of A. P. Hill and Longstreet, might well have appeared impregnable. Whiting, with Law's and Hood's Brigades, moving to the right, were met by General Lee and directed to support General A. P. Hill, and when Jackson's lines advanced they found themselves confronted by the same conditions which

[1] Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson," II, p. 29.

had broken and dashed to pieces the charging lines of A. P. Hill and Longstreet. Again and again they had moved forward, only to be smashed to pieces and form and dash forward again. It was then, adds Henderson, that Jackson recognized that the "sustained fire was a sure token that the enemy still held his own; and for the first time and the last his staff beheld their leader riding restlessly to and fro, and heard his orders given in a tone which betrayed the storm within." [1]

Finally he sent to his lieutenants an order. "Tell them," he said, "this affair must hang in suspense no longer. Let them sweep the field with the bayonet."

So obstinately did Porter cling to his position, and so complete was the repulse of Hill, that Lee thought that they must outnumber him, and felt that the enemy was gradually gaining ground. He, therefore, "sent orders to Longstreet, who was near at hand, to make a diversion against the Federal left near the river." [2] According to Longstreet, he sent an urgent message to that general, who was in reserve on the extreme right, that "all other efforts had failed, and that unless he could do something the day was lost."

This diversion was made by three brigades under Wilcox, and Pickett's Brigade, which developed the strong position and force of the enemy in his front. "Whereupon," Longstreet says, "from the urgent nature of the message from the commanding general and my

[1] *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 34.

[2] War Records, series I, vol. II, part II, p. 737. Allan's "Army of Northern Virginia," p. 88

own peculiar position, I determined to change the feint into an attack, and orders for a general attack were issued." [1] He adds that "at this moment General Whiting arrived with his division and put it into position at once and joined in the assault."

At this time, however, Porter's reserves had already been exhausted. He had despatched to McClellan in the morning that he hoped to do without aid; but that his retreat was a delicate movement, and he requested that Franklin, or some other command, be held ready to reinforce him. Slocum's division reached the field at four o'clock and enabled Porter to hold out for some two hours more. An urgent appeal was sent to McClellan by Porter for further reinforcements; but, to quote Allan, "so efficiently had Lee's orders to Magruder and Huger, to hold the enemy in their front by demonstrations and a display of force on the Richmond side, been carried out, that none of the Federal commanders thought it safe to spare any more troops to aid Porter." McClellan, undoubtedly, toward the end of the day, made efforts to relieve Porter. At half-past five, having heard from Franklin that he did not think it prudent to take any more troops from his front at that time, he sent him word that Porter was hard pressed, and that it was "not a question of prudence but of possibilities"; that he had ordered eight regiments of Sumner's to support Porter, and, if possible, Franklin was also to send a brigade.[2]

About dusk the brigades of French and Meagher were

[1] *Ibid.* Ropes, II.
[2] War Records, series I, vol. XI, part I, p. 59.

sent across, and arrived just in time to save the defeat of Porter from becoming a rout.

Henderson, who is certainly high authority, and who has at times something of a brief for Jackson, has undertaken to relieve Jackson for his extraordinary and inexplicable failure to bear the part expected of him in the battle, and says that "Lee had anticipated that Jackson's approach would cause the enemy to prolong their front in order to cover their line of retreat to the White House, and so weaken that part of the position which was to be attacked by Longstreet"; and that "Jackson had been ordered to draw up his troops so as to meet such a contingency." He admits that no record of such an order is to be found, and that Jackson never mentioned, either at the time or afterward, what its purport was, and when he states that his surviving staff officers are unanimous in declaring that he must have received direct instructions from General Lee, he shows that they are only reasoning on probabilities and not stating a fact known to them.

In his later account of the battle, contained in his history of the war, Longstreet states that "just as the brigades advanced, General Whiting pressed through the woods with his own and Hood's Brigades and reported that he had lost sight of his commander, General Jackson, in the forest, and asked him to put him into the battle, which was done." From Longstreet's account it might appear that he, himself, had ordered the general advance which carried the day; but a greater general than Longstreet ordered this advance—the same who had met Whiting and sent him to his

aid.[1] In this advance Hood's Texans led the way, followed by Whiting's other brigade, who had orders to charge without firing a shot. "The Federal lines were broken near their centre. The Confederates bore in, turning the right of the troops which constituted Porter's left, and also making it imperative for those on the right of his line to abandon their position." Before nightfall the field was swept, and as the sun sank, the standards of the Army of Northern Virginia were planted on the breastworks from one end to the other where Porter's intrepid soldiery had clung till the rammers could not be driven into their guns.

"As the Federals retreated," continues Henderson, "knots of brave men, hastily collected by officers of all ranks, still offered a fierce resistance, and, supported by the batteries, inflicted terrible losses on the crowded masses which swarmed up from the ravine; but the majority of the infantry, without ammunition and with few officers, streamed in disorder to the rear. For a time the Federal gunners stood manfully to their work. Porter's reserve artillery, drawn up midway across the upland, offered a rallying point to the retreating infantry. Three small squadrons of the Fifth United States Cavalry made a gallant but useless charge, in which, out of seven officers, six fell; and on the extreme right the division of regulars, supported by a brigade of volunteers, fell back fighting to a second line. As at Bull Run, the disciplined soldiers alone showed a solid front amid the throng of fugitives. . . . But their stubborn valor availed nothing against the

[1] Long's "Robert E. Lee," p. 173.

superior numbers which Lee's fine strategy had concentrated on the field of battle."

The Confederates pushed forward across the hard-won field, gathering up prisoners and capturing twenty-two guns, besides many stands of colors, and it is believed by close students of the situation that had they kept on they might have captured many more, and possibly have destroyed McClellan's entire right wing. From this additional disaster McClellan was saved by the obscurity of the night and the opportune arrival of Meagher and French with 5,000 fresh troops. "Between the bridges and the battle-field, on the slopes falling to the Chickahominy, the dark forest covered the retreat of the routed army. Night had already fallen. The confusion in the ranks of the Confederates was extreme, and it was impossible to distinguish friend from foe. All direction had been lost. None knew the bearings of the bridges, or whether the Federals were retreating east or south. Regiments had already been exposed to the fire of their comrades." At this crucial moment, cheers rolling up from the valley through the dusk told that reinforcements had arrived, and the spent Confederates were halted on the field. "Pushing through the mass of fugitives with the bayonet, these fine troops . . . formed line on the southern crest of the plateau. Joining the regulars, who still presented a stubborn front, they opened a heavy fire, and under cover of their steadfast lines, Porter's troops withdrew across the river."

Thus Lee defeated McClellan in the furious battle of Gaines's Mill and Cold Harbor, seizing his position after

desperate fighting, capturing his line of communication to West Point, and, driving him across the Chickahominy, forced him to abandon his threatening position on its south side and fall back across White Oak Swamp to Malvern Hill, some miles to the rear. It was a brilliant stroke for Lee to have crushed McClellan's right wing, while he held the rest of his army with only 25,000 men. And had Jackson attacked on the morning of the 26th, as planned, or possibly even on the morning of the 27th, the victory might have been yet more decisive.[1] But it was necessary to do more to drive McClellan back from before Richmond.

Jackson's error in underestimating the time required to join Lee in his first assault on McClellan was a costly one, and Lee's casualty list was appalling.[2] A considerable part of this might have been spared had Jackson been able to turn McClellan's wing on the morning of the 26th before Hill crossed the creek in front to attempt the desperate assault on his centre.

On the 28th Lee held his army in hand, watchful to see which way McClellan, after his staggering blow, would move, whether by the way he had come, down the Peninsula, or toward the James. Ewell and Stuart were sent forward down the river to strike McClellan's

[1] Taylor's "General Lee," pp. 68–78.

[2] Colonel Thomas L. Livermore figures the Union losses at Gaines's Mill at 894 killed, 3,107 wounded, and 2,836 missing—total, 6,834; the Confederate losses, killed and wounded, at 8,751. The losses in all the Seven Days' Battles, from the 25th of June to July 1, he states as follows: Union—Killed, 1,734; wounded, 8,062; missing, 6,053; total, 15,849. Confederate—Killed, 3,478; wounded, 16,261; missing, 875; total, 20,614. ("Numbers and Losses," p. 86.) Allan reckons the Confederate losses at 19,700; the Union losses at 15,765. ("Army of Northern Virginia," p. 141.)

line of communication and probable line of retreat along the York River Railroad. The railroad was reached at Dispatch Station—which was destroyed together with the stores collected there—and, the railroad bridge across the Chickahominy having been burnt by the guard on its retreat, Ewell halted there while Stuart rode on to West Point, where the enemy's vast stores that McClellan had left were being destroyed. Driving off Stoneman, he captured what was left. Meantime McClellan, having on the night of the 27th held a council of war with his generals, had destroyed his upper bridges across the Chickahominy and the immense quantity of stores brought with his army, and now, in full retreat on James River, was endeavoring to get his army across White Oak Swamp at his rear. This difficult and hazardous movement was ably and successfully conducted, owing largely to the "vast and impenetrable forest and jungle, under cover of which it was being executed," and to the failure of the commanders in his front to ascertain his movements.

Inasmuch as Lee has been criticised for not discovering earlier McClellan's intentions, his own views of the matter are interesting. Speaking of the 28th, he says: "During the forenoon, columns of dust south of the Chickahominy showed that the Federal army was in motion. The abandonment of the railroad and the destruction of the bridge proved that no further attempt would be made to hold that line. But from the position it occupied, the roads, which led toward James River, would also enable it to reach the lower bridges over the Chickahominy and retreat down the Peninsula. In the latter event it was necessary that our

troops should continue on the north bank of the river, and until the intention of General McClellan was discovered it was deemed injudicious to change their disposition. Ewell was, therefore, ordered to proceed to Bottom's Bridge, to guard that point, and the cavalry to watch the bridges below. No certain indications of a retreat to the James River were discovered by our forces on the south side of the Chickahominy, and late in the afternoon the enemy's works were reported to be fully manned. The strength of these fortifications prevented Generals Huger and Magruder from discovering what was passing in their front. Below the enemy's works the country was densely wooded and intersected by impassable swamps, at once concealing his movements and precluding reconnoissances except by the regular roads, all of which were strongly guarded. The bridges over the Chickahominy, in rear of the enemy, were destroyed, and their reconstruction impracticable in the presence of his whole army and powerful batteries. We were, therefore, compelled to wait until his purpose should be developed. Generals Huger and Magruder were again directed to use the utmost vigilance and pursue the enemy vigorously should they discover that he was retreating. During the afternoon and night of the 28th the signs of a general movement were apparent, and no indications of his approach to the lower bridges of the Chickahominy having been discovered by the pickets in observation at those points, it became manifest that General McClellan was retreating to the James River." [1]

As soon as it became apparent what he would do, Lee

[1] Lee's report, W. R., series I, vol. XI, part I, p. 493.

ordered his troops to the south side of the Chickahominy and proceeded to attack again at Savage Station on the 29th. It was the afternoon, however, before Lee was sufficiently informed as to McClellan's disposition of his forces to attack him again, and when Magruder assaulted his lines near Savage Station, McClellan had been in full retreat long enough to get most of his army across White Oak Swamp, and it was only his strong rear guard that Magruder struck, the main army being on the other side of the impenetrable jungle and morass.

Longstreet crossed at New Bridge in the morning with his own and A. P. Hill's commands and advanced to the Darbytown Road. Holmes was brought over from Drewry's Bluff to the north side of the James. Magruder was sent forward toward Savage Station, and Jackson was directed to cross at Grapevine Bridge and support the movement. Jackson, however, was delayed all day in rebuilding the bridge. Magruder was slow, and on coming up with Sumner at Savage Station, failed to use all his troops, and though McLaws, in the lead, made a gallant fight against superior numbers till dark, it was not supported, and McClellan was enabled that night to get across White Oak Swamp and destroy the bridges behind him.

"Lee's design was to close in as rapidly as possible on the rear and flank of the retreating enemy, and by throwing his whole force on McClellan's army, already staggering as it was by Porter's defeat, and still more demoralized by a hurried retreat and an immense destruction of stores, to deal it a decisive blow. For

this purpose all his lieutenants were ordered to press the enemy on the morrow."

Magruder was ordered to pass southward around by the Darbytown Road, and then was sent forward to unite with Holmes and attack the enemy before he could secure his position at Malvern Hill. He arrived, however, too late to aid Holmes, who had attacked, but found himself under the fire of all their guns, both on land and water, and was forced to retire. Jackson, having crossed the Chickahominy during the night and pushed on to White Oak Swamp, found himself stopped by the destruction of the bridge and unable to rebuild it in face of the furious fire which was kept up by the enemy (Franklin's corps) on the other side.

In the expectation that Jackson would force his crossing at White Oak Swamp and be on McClellan's rear in time to co-operate with Longstreet, the latter advanced down the Long Bridge Road and encountered the main force of McClellan's army posted at Frazier's Farm, or Glendale, at the Charles City Cross Roads. Here Longstreet's Division was deployed across the Long Bridge Road, with a division of A. P. Hill in reserve, except Branch's Brigade, which was posted to the right and rear to guard against Hooker's division, posted behind the Quaker Road to the right. Huger's column was expected to advance on the Charles City Road and attack on the right. Longstreet, supposing that the firing on his right came from Huger's attack, began the battle. His order was, he states, "for Colonel Jenkins to silence a battery which was annoying them, and this was taken as an order to advance." It

developed instantly that the enemy was present in great force, and from this time until night the divisions of Longstreet and A. P. Hill maintained "one of the bloodiest struggles that took place during the Civil War." On both sides along the Darbytown Road charges and countercharges were made with the greatest gallantry; but when night fell, McCall's fine division, who had borne the brunt of the fight, had been crushed, its gallant commander captured, and fourteen guns as well. The Federal lines, though bravely defended by numbers largely superior to the attacking force, had been carried with the exception of a single position. But though a staggering blow had been dealt to the Federal army, "night found it still holding the Quaker Road and its line of retreat consequently unobstructed." Critics appear to be agreed that this battle of Glendale, or Frazier's Farm, was "the crisis of the Seven Days' Battles," and that had Lee been able to concentrate his whole strength against the Federals, it is probable that McClellan would never have reached the James.[1] "This day," adds Allan, "marked the crisis in the Seven Days' Battles, for it was on this 30th of June that Lee more nearly grasped the full fruits of his strategy, and McClellan more nearly escaped complete overthrow, than on any other."

Once more Lee's admirable plans had failed because of the failure of his lieutenants to co-operate at the crucial moment. "The Confederate commander had arranged with admirable strategy to throw his whole army upon the flank and rear of his retreating foe.

[1] Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson," II, p. 48.

While Holmes, on his right, was to try to seize Malvern Hill, and Jackson, on his left, was to press the rear of the retreating army, three columns under Huger, Longstreet, and Magruder were to strike at his centre. . . . They were all in position by midday, and by the middle of the afternoon 50,000 men or more should have been attacking the Union lines. But, as we have seen, only the column under Longstreet and A. P. Hill did anything—the others accomplished nothing. They did not even prevent reinforcements from getting to the Federal centre. It is impossible to deny that General Lee was very poorly served on this occasion by his subordinates." [1]

This failure on the part of Lee's lieutenants to cooperate was to cost the South and the Army of Northern Virginia dear. That night McClellan continued his retreat and by daylight the commands of Franklin, Slocum, Heintzelman, and Sumner had joined Porter on the uplands of Malvern Hill, where McClellan had determined to make his last stand. Here in what is esteemed one of the strongest positions that an army could assume—a high plateau, rising to the height of over 100 feet above the surrounding country, a mile and a half in length, by a half mile in breadth—admirably protected, both in front and on the sides, by deep bottoms and swamps, with wide stretches of open ground beyond them, and approached only by two roads—the River Road and the Quaker Road—McClellan posted his army in a great crescent. It was, indeed, formidable

[1] Allan's "Army of Northern Virginia," pp. 120, 121. *Cf.* also "History of the Civil War in America," Comte de Paris, vol. II, p. 132.

and could hardly have been stronger, with his remaining artillery, which—including his heavy siege guns, and aided by the raking fire from the gunboats in the river—was still powerful, covering with converging fire every point of the line. Here, however, notwithstanding the strength of the position, Lee determined to attack once more.

All of the forenoon and a part of the afternoon were spent in reconnoissances, and it was not until four o'clock that the attack began. Jackson, who had now come up, was on the left, with Whiting to the left of the Quaker Road, and D. H. Hill to the right with one of Ewell's Brigades, while Jackson's own division, with the rest of Ewell's troops, was in reserve. A half mile beyond Jackson's right was Huger and behind him, to the left, was Magruder. Longstreet and A. P. Hill were in reserve behind Magruder on the Long Bridge Road and Holmes was on the River Road to the right.

It was now five o'clock, and "if anything was to be done, no more time should be lost." General Lee was urgent that the assault be made. The original order for battle had been given about noon, and there had been fighting to the extreme left. Armistead and Wright had attempted to advance and had been repulsed with heavy loss, and, with their batteries hammered to pieces, had been forced to withdraw them, and now "held their infantry in hand until the arrival of other troops." Here Whiting was carrying on a spirited but unequal artillery contest. Meantime efforts had been made to bring the artillery to

the front; but owing to the swamps and thickets through which they had to force their way, they were overpowered by the concentrated fire of the Federal guns before they got into action. The obstacles, says Lee in his report, "presented by the woods and swamps made it impracticable to bring up a sufficient amount of artillery to oppose successfully the extraordinary force of that arm employed by the enemy, while the field itself offered so few positions favorable for its use and none for its proper concentration."

Lee, according to Longstreet, proposed to him now to move to the left with his own and A. P. Hill's Divisions and turn the Federal right, and this, he states, he issued his orders to do; but through some mistake the order to attack, which had already been issued, was not rescinded, and between five and six o'clock, Magruder, with only two brigades of his three divisions, Armistead's and Wright's, in position, engaged the enemy's left, and D. H. Hill, taking this for the signal, sent forward five brigades full against the enemy's front, only to have them decimated and forced back under the terrible concentrated fire of McClellan's massed guns.

From time to time after this, first in one part of the field and then in another, supports were sent in; intrepid advances and furious charges were made; but there was no concert. The two divisions under Magruder were beaten in detail; two or three brigades at one time were sent forward, and when broken and beaten back, others took their places, only to meet a similar fate. The battle was a succession of "desperate but

disjointed and badly managed charges"; and when night fell, though neither Longstreet nor A. P. Hill had been engaged, and three of Jackson's Divisions —his own, Whiting's, and Ewell's—had suffered little, and though Huger, on a point of etiquette, withheld supports, while Holmes had scarcely fought at all, five thousand Confederates had fallen bravely on the slopes of Malvern Hill, and McClellan's lines were still unbroken.

For making the frontal attack which now began and which proved so deadly to the assailants, instead of attempting to turn McClellan's flank, Lee has been often and severely criticised. The frontal attack, however, was due to the report made to Lee by Longstreet after Lee, who had been too indisposed himself to reconnoitre in person, had instructed Longstreet to reconnoitre the enemy's left and report whether an attack on that side was feasible. Jackson, it is said, was opposed to a frontal attack, preferring to turn the enemy's right. Longstreet, however, according to his own account, was of a different opinion and reported to General Lee that the "spacious open along Jackson's front appeared to offer a field for the play of a hundred or more guns," and he judged that it might justify assault, and the tremendous game at issue called for adventure. "I thought it probable," he adds, "that Porter's batteries under the cross-fire of the Confederate guns, posted on his left and front, could be thrown into disorder and thus make way for the combined assaults of the infantry.

"I so reported, and General Lee ordered dispositions

accordingly, sending the pioneer corps to cut a road for the right batteries." [1]

It was a costly sacrifice; but that night McClellan, feeling that his men were completely worn out, and knowing how large a portion of Lee's army had not been engaged the day before, and assured that he might look for further trouble if he remained in that position, withdrew his army under cover of his gunboats. "My men are completely exhausted," he wrote that day before the battle, "and I dread the result if we are attacked to-day by fresh troops. If possible, I shall retire to-night to Harrison's Bar, where the gunboats can render more aid in covering our position. Permit me to urge that not an hour should be lost in sending me fresh troops. More gunboats are much needed." [2]

The failure of some of his lieutenants to grasp the situation prevented the complete success of Lee's plans, and McClellan not only got safely across White Oak Swamp, and reached a position at Malvern Hill of such strength that the attack on him here has been considered by able critics almost the greatest error Lee ever committed; but saved his army. Whatever the errors of his lieutenants, Lee had saved Richmond. From this time he bore the fortunes of the Confederacy on his shoulders.

Thus Lee had, with less than 80,000 men, by his audacious tactics and masterly handling of his troops, defeated McClellan with more than 105,000 men and

[1] "From Manassas to Appomattox," p. 143.

[2] Report on Conduct of War, vol. I, p. 340. Allan's "Army of Northern Virginia," p. 138.

superior equipment, and driven him from position after position, relieving Richmond from what had appeared imminent danger of immediate capture.

Military critics have often wondered why Jackson, who both before and after the seven days' fighting around Richmond proved himself the most eager, prompt, and aggressive lieutenant that any commander had during the war, should apparently have been so slow in the execution of the part intrusted to him in this critical movement. Old soldiers who followed and adored him still discuss the mysterious failure, and admit that "Old Jack" was "not himself" at this crisis. Not only did he fail to attack that first afternoon on his arrival within sound of the furious battle raging but a few miles away, but next day also he halted at Cold Harbor for over an hour while Hill and Longstreet were left to put in their last battalions, and again at White Oak Swamp, two days later, he failed, as he hardly ever did either earlier or later, to make good his attempt to reach the enemy's line.

An explanation of the first failure has been given that he mistook the road leading toward the field of Cold Harbor and missed his way.

The writer, as a resident of that region, familiar with the country and with the discussion of the facts, ventures to suggest a simple explanation.

The distance from the valley to the Chickahominy being about one hundred and thirty miles, the bringing forward of his troops, even with the indifferent assistance of his trains, occupied several days, and the general himself, with a staff officer, at a point some

sixty-odd miles west of Richmond, left the train and rode to Richmond to consult with Lee as to details. His selection of this mode of travel has been attributed to his fear of being recognized if he should continue by train, but was no doubt partly to familiarize himself somewhat with the roads, which through Hanover wind among the forks of the Pamunkey through a thickly wooded, flat country, and are very confusing. It is of record that he then thought he could be up and ready to co-operate with Hill on the 25th, but General Longstreet claims that he urged that this was impossible, and that if not the 27th, at the earliest the 26th should be set for the attack, which was agreed to. At Beaver Dam Station, on the railway, forty miles from Richmond, the last troops were taken from the train, and, together with those who had been marching the day before, took the road for Richmond by way of Honeyman's Bridge over the Little River, a branch of the North Anna, and then, owing to high water in the South Anna, instead of taking the shorter route by Groundsquirrel Bridge, some of them marched by way of the Fork Church to Ashland. From Little River to the field of Cold Harbor the roads are deep with sand, water is scant, and in the blazing days of late June the progress of the troops was much slower than had been reckoned on, and the move took nearly a day longer than had been expected. Meanwhile, Jackson, who had left his train and ridden sixty-odd miles to Richmond to confer with Lee, rode straight back to bring his men forward, met them at a point more than fifty miles from Richmond, and returned with them. Thus,

when he reached the slashes of Hanover, he had been in the saddle almost continuously for several days and nights and was completely broken down.[1]

Members of a troop of cavalry, known as the Hanover Troop (Co. C, 4th Virginia Cavalry), who came from that region, were detailed to act as guides for the troops, but many of the roads are mere tracks, and the man detailed to guide Jackson,[2] on reaching the neighborhood of the battle-field, found so many new roads cut through the forest by McClellan's troops, and so many houses and other familiar landmarks gone, that he became confused and led the column some distance on the wrong road before discovering his error. It then became necessary to retrace their way; but, marching the other troops back and turning around the artillery in the narrow road, bordered by forest and thickets, much time was lost. Ewell, who was present, threatened to hang the guide; but Jackson intervened and bade him guide them back.[3] This, however, does not account for Jackson's failure to attack earlier on the day of Gaines's Mill, or his failure to cross and aid

[1] I remember as a boy seeing Jackson's columns passing down the road near my home in Hanover, some fifteen miles above Ashland, and every hour or so the men were made to lie down full-length on the ground to rest. The troops, or a portion of them, instead of keeping straight ahead across Newfound River and the South Anna by Ground-squirrel Bridge, turned off after crossing Little River at Honeyman's Bridge and marched to Ashland by the Fork Church.

[2] Lincoln Sydnor.

[3] The fact of Jackson's complete prostration is mentioned in a letter written at the time by his aide-de-camp, the gallant Major, afterward Lieutenant-Colonel, Alexander S. Pendleton, killed later at Fisher's Hill. The other circumstances I had stated to me in a letter from A. R. Ellerson, Esquire, a member of the Hanover troop, whose home was near Mechanicsville, and who was with Sydnor at Jackson's head-quarters and was sent with despatches from General Lee. See Appendix.

Magruder on the afternoon of the day of Savage Station, and Longstreet and Hill on the day of Frazier's Farm. Colonel Henderson exculpates him from adverse criticism, and thinks that he had good ground for his action on each occasion, which is certainly high authority. But the fact remains unexplained, and as Allan, who admired him vastly, admits, "it is best to set it down as one of the few great mistakes of his marvellous career." [1] Never before or after did Jackson fail to march to the sound of the guns or fail to keep a rendezvous on the field of battle.

One familiar only with the open fields to the west and north of Richmond would scarcely guess the extent of the almost impenetrable thickets along the Chickahominy. They were wellnigh as much a terra incognita to the Southern leaders as to the Northern. Jackson, as already stated, even with a guide familiar with the region, got entangled among them on his forced march down to join Lee, on the Wednesday of the second day's battle around Richmond, and thus failed to make the junction at the critical moment. While, however, these inextricable tangles of the swamps along the Chickahominy caused Lee much inconvenience, and frustrated portions of his plans for the destruction of the enemy, they stood him in good stead in his audacious attack on McClellan's far-stretched lines. They at once veiled his movements and offered a barrier broken only where the country roads of Hanover and Henrico pierced them at a few points easy to be defended. The swamps of the Chickahominy remained

[1] Allan's "Army of Northern Virginia," p. 121.

as dense and impenetrable as when John Smith, two centuries and a half before, had stuck fast in them a little lower down and fallen a prey to his enemies. For long distances they were so impenetrable that, as was said by the guide whom General Lee had sent for to pilot a part of his attacking forces, "not even an old hare could get through."

However it was, Lee relieved Richmond, and the war, from being based on the issue of a single campaign, was now a matter of years and treasure, and the years and the treasure that it required were mainly due to Lee's transcendent genius. It is probable that but for Lee the war would not have lasted two years.

It is one of the notable facts connected with the conduct of the war that the staff should have been so disproportioned to the demands on it. Nearly all critics have remarked on it. Lee had but few trained soldiers on his staff; gallant gentlemen he had, men ready to lay down their lives for him or their cause; but not many of them men trained to war. Possibly, to this was due the fact that so often his best-laid plans failed of being exactly carried out. He never had a staff officer who could render him the service which he rendered Scott at Cerro Gordo and Contreras. He often rode with a single officer, and at times absolutely alone. And when toward the latter part of the war he wished to have his son as his chief of staff, the wish was denied him. Such was the strange constituency of the Confederate Government.

Whatever criticism may have been offered, the South was jubilant, and amid its tears acclaimed Lee and his

gallant army as its saviors. And Lee himself appears to have been well content with the issue. The results of the battles around Richmond were summed up by him as follows:

In his General Order (No. 75, dated July 7, 1862), tendering his "warmest thanks and congratulations to the army by whose valor such splendid results were achieved," he says: "On Monday, June 26, the powerful and thoroughly equipped army of the enemy was entrenched in works vast in extent and most formidable in character, within sight of our capital.

"To-day the remains of that confident and threatening host lie upon the banks of the James River, thirty miles from Richmond, seeking to recover, under the protection of his gunboats, from the effects of a series of disastrous defeats.

"The immediate fruits of your success are the relief of Richmond from a state of siege, the routing of the great army that so long menaced its safety, many thousand prisoners, including officers of high rank, the capture or destruction of stores to the value of millions, and the acquisition of thousands of arms and fifty-one pieces of superior artillery."

He concludes, after a tribute to the "gallant dead who died nobly in defence of their country's freedom": "Soldiers, your country will thank you for the heroic conduct you have displayed—conduct worthy of men engaged in a cause so just and sacred, and deserving a nation's gratitude and praise."

In the pride and joy of the victory, and in the relief that the great army which had been thundering at the

gates had been defeated and driven back, the people of the South took little account of the errors that had been committed by Lee's lieutenants, who were all gallant soldiers and able commanders. Yet it was due to these errors that McClellan's army had been only routed, and not destroyed. And no one knew it so well as Lee. Had Jackson turned Porter's wing as planned, Hill's vast losses would not have occurred, and Porter could never have rejoined McClellan. Had Magruder and Huger not failed to discover that McClellan was retreating, he might never have crossed White Oak Swamp. Had Jackson made good his crossing at White Oak Swamp, McClellan would possibly not have had time to make his last stand at Malvern Hill, and might have lost his entire army. And finally, when Stuart, in advance of the rest of Lee's army, reached Evelington Heights and found McClellan's army lying beneath him on the low grounds, had he but waited until Longstreet came up, instead of firing on them with a bare section of light artillery, the end might have come that day. As it was, in his eagerness he did not wait, and Longstreet, whom he supposed close by, had taken another road.

## CHAPTER VIII

### LEE RELIEVES RICHMOND

LEE had thus in a month sprung almost to the full measure of fame. "After the Seven Days' Battles," says Henderson, "the war assumed a new aspect. . . . The strategy which had relieved Richmond recalled the master-strokes of Napoleon." [1]

The government at Washington, which had on the 11th of July appointed Major-General William W. Halleck to the chief command of all the armies of the United States, had now determined to unite the forces of Fremont, Banks, and McDowell, though it was against the views of its principal advisers, including McClellan himself. Halleck's appointment followed immediately on a personal visit of Mr. Lincoln to McClellan's army on July 8, in which he ascertained that the army had 86,500 men present for duty, and 73,500 absent, and that the sentiment there was that 100,000 additional reinforcements were deemed necessary to march on Richmond with any hope of success. The general selected for the command was Major-General John Pope, an officer who was a distinguished graduate of West Point and who had achieved some success in the West. He had a self-confidence in which McClellan was somewhat wanting. He began by issuing a rodo-

[1] "Life of Stonewall Jackson," II, 109.

montade which amused even his own army,[1] and he so inflamed the South by an order of banishment of all persons who would not take the oath of allegiance, and by threats of seizure of non-combatants as hostages,[2] and of confiscation of their property, that a note was prepared by the Confederate Government excepting Pope and his officers from the cartel just signed with McClellan for the exchange of prisoners of war. Lee himself appears to have regarded Pope with amused contempt. He wrote Jackson, "I want Pope suppressed," and in a letter to his wife (July 28, 1862) he writes her to tell his youngest son, then a private in the Rockbridge Artillery under Jackson, "to catch Pope for me, and also bring in his cousin, Louis Marshall, who, I am told, is on his staff." And he adds: "I could forgive the latter fighting against us, but not his joining Pope."

The question, now, was whether to reinforce McClellan or Pope, and Burnside, who had been brought up from the South, was held at Newport News, at the mouth of the James, awaiting the decision of the civilian commanders in Washington. In this decision Lee bore a conspicuous part.

Having assumed the offensive and won signal success, Lee was not a general to lose the fruit of his victory and be forced back into a defensive position, the perils of which he well knew. McClellan was routed and driven back to the shelter of his gunboats; but he was still within little more than a day's march of Rich-

[1] Off. Rec., V, p. 552.
[2] General Orders 7 and 11.

mond, with an army which, though demoralized, yet outnumbered Lee's, and was, in its position, still formidable.[1] And he could at any time cross to the south bank of the James and attack Richmond from that side and threaten the cutting off of communication with the South by the chief line of communication, the Richmond and Danville Railway, a move he urgently recommended, but as to which he was overruled by Halleck and the other authorities in Washington.[2] McDowell, too, a gallant soldier and gentleman, was still at Fredericksburg with a good part of the First Corps, and hungry for a chance to atone for his disaster at Bull Run, and Pope, with another army greater than Lee could send against him, was advancing across the Piedmont, dating his letters from "Headquarters in the saddle," and boasting that he never saw anything but the backs of his enemies, and that "if he had McClellan's army he would march to New Orleans."[3]

Major-General Pope, in command of the united armies of Fremont, Banks, and McDowell, had in all some 70,000 men. He now lay on the rolling uplands between the upper Rappahannock and the Rapidan, headed for Gordonsville. Pope had, as already stated, incurred the hatred of the South by his orders to seize and shoot non-combatants in reprisal for the acts of

[1] McClellan's army, by his return of July 10, showed present and equipped for duty, 98,631 men. On July 10, General Lee's report showed that, exclusive of the troops in North Carolina, he had 64,419 men.

[2] Ropes, II, p. 238.

[3] Pope gave his force as 43,000. Taylor's "General Lee," p. 86.

what he termed "roving bands," and only complete success would have excused the gasconade which he addressed to his army, lauding himself and reflecting on those gallant but unfortunate officers whom he had supplanted. The Confederate Government declared him outside of the pale.

If he should seize the Virginia Central Railroad he would destroy an important avenue with the Southwest, and the one avenue of communication with the valley of Virginia. He was already on the Rapidan within a day's march of the important junction at Gordonsville, and a little later his cavalry burnt Beaver Dam Station, forty miles from Richmond. If he should unite with McClellan the South would be lost. The situation was not a whit less critical than it had been on the 1st of June, when McClellan was advancing by approaches to shell Richmond. Moreover, President Lincoln had already called for 300,000 more men.

But Lee was, of all men, the man to meet the situation. It might well be said of him as Condé and Turenne said of Merci, that he never lost a favorable moment, or failed to anticipate their most secret designs, as if he had assisted in their councils. He knew that the needle is not more sensitive to the proximity of steel than was the government at Washington to the moving of Stonewall Jackson in their direction. Jackson was in favor of invading Northern territory, and had avouched his readiness to follow any one who would fight. Lee knew his mettle and used it. When some one said to Jackson: "This new general needs

your attention," his reply was: "And, please God, he shall have it." This was Lee's feeling also.

Let those who rank General Lee among the defensive captains say whether he acted on the defensive or offensive when, leaving only some 20,000 men to guard Richmond, with McClellan still at Harrison's Landing, hurrying troops now to the south side of the James, now to Malvern Hill, he with rare audacity turned on Pope, advancing with threatenings and slaughter across the Piedmont, and sent Jackson to strike him beyond the Rapidan. And when, after the first stroke at Cedar Mountain, he sent him sweeping around in a great half circle through Thoroughfare Gap, struck him, at Groveton, a staggering blow, and facing him on the rolling plain of Manassas, routed and drove him back to the shelter of the forts around Alexandria, and then with his army, ill-clad and ill-shod, so threatened the national capital that McClellan was hastily recalled from the James to its defence.

After a rest of about ten days, spent in watching McClellan, who from time to time was moving troops up to Malvern Hill, or across the James, as if to renew his attack on Richmond, Lee addressed his attention to Pope. Pope, assured in his mind that he was on the march on Richmond, and boasting that with McClellan's force he "could march to New Orleans," pushed his army forward beyond Manassas, where he massed his supplies, and on across the Rappahannock with the intention of seizing the important point, Gordonsville, where the Orange and Alexandria Railroad from Washington united with the Virginia Central Railroad, the line con-

necting Richmond with the valley of Virginia, and with the line running from Charlottesville to the South-west.

Lee's soldier's eye promptly saw the perilous situation in which Pope had placed himself, and his soldier's instinct promptly divined the means of striking him. Lee had now under him for Richmond's defence 64,419 men, exclusive of the force in North Carolina, while McClellan, at Harrison's Landing, had 98,631 men (July 10). He conceived the audacious design of massing his forces suddenly in Pope's front and, while he held him with a part, sending the remainder around his right wing to turn his flank and sever his line of communication. He felt sure that that would relieve Richmond, but he hoped also to destroy Pope. Thus, while with a portion of his depleted army he covered Richmond, he prepared a stroke which should shake Washington and relieve Richmond. On the 13th he despatched Jackson with his division and Ewell's—in all, some 11,000 men—to Gordonsville to confront Pope, who reported to Washington a week later that Ewell was at Gordonsville with 6,000 men, and Jackson at Louisa Court House, a short distance away, with 25,000 men. Pope heard of him first at Louisa, less than forty miles away. This sent Halleck off to consult McClellan in a hurry. McClellan thought he might have gone to the West to fight Buel. McClellan was strenuously urged by Halleck, who visited him for the purpose, to attack Richmond at once, and he assented provided he should be given 20,000 additional troops, which were promised him.

The effect of Lee's bold movement was what he

anticipated. A week later Washington knew that Jackson had left Richmond, but had no idea whither he was bound; for Jackson divulged his plans not even to his chief of staff. Jackson, on his arrival at Gordonsville, finding himself confronted by an army many times his own in numbers, applied to Lee for reinforcements. He had but about 11,000 men. At first Lee felt unable to meet his demand, but when Pope's cavalry raiders struck the Virginia Central Railroad at Beaver Dam and cut his line of communication within forty miles of Richmond, he despatched Stuart and A. P. Hill to Jackson's aid. This brought his force up to 18,700, with which Lee expressed the hope that Pope might be "suppressed." Lee, who knew Jackson's extreme reticence, and evidently thought it not always advantageous, wrote him to suggest his conferring with Hill, whom he recommended to him as "a good officer, with whom he could consult," adding, "and by advising with your division commanders as to your movements, much trouble will be saved you in arranging details, and they can act more intelligently. I wish to save you trouble from my increasing your command. *Cache* your troops as much as possible," he adds, " till you can strike your blow, and be prepared to return to me when done, if necessary. I will endeavor to keep General McClellan quiet till it is over, if rapidly executed." [1] Culpeper was the key to the situation, as several roads met there. So Jackson was to go to Culpeper. On the 9th of August Jackson, moving on Culpeper, attacked

[1] Lee to Jackson, July 27, 1862.

and defeated his old opponent, Banks, at Cedar Run, some twenty miles north of Gordonsville, and then withdrew toward Gordonsville to avoid attack by Pope's entire army until Lee should be ready to reinforce him. Pope wrote that he would have Gordonsville and Charlottesville in ten days. Washington, however, was in a panic. Burnside had been ordered up from the South to reinforce McClellan, who was clamoring for an additional 100,000 men; but he was still held at Newport News so that he "might move on short notice, one way or the other, where ordered." And on the 14th of August McClellan received orders from Washington to withdraw his army from the Peninsula for the protection of the national capital. Lee had already freed his mind of anxiety as to McClellan. As has been well said, he read him like an open book. He knew that for the present McClellan would give no more trouble on the Peninsula, and his quarry now was Pope. He wished to strike him swiftly before McClellan could join him. On the 13th day of August, Lee, having matured his plans and feeling secure as to Richmond, even though McClellan moved a division up to occupy Malvern Hill, as if to move again on Richmond, ordered Longstreet with Hood to Gordonsville, sending thither also R. H. Anderson, and going himself to take personal charge. He had thus massed quickly some 54,000 men ready for his stroke, leaving only two brigades for the defence of Richmond. But President Davis wrote him: "Confidence in you overcomes the view which would otherwise be taken.[1] Jackson was eager to attack

[1] Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," II, p. 254. Colonel William Allan, p. 199, n. 18, W. R., pp. 928, 945.

at once, but Lee decided to wait till the men had sufficient supplies. On the 19th he issued his order for attack on the 20th. In the interval, however, a serious contretemps occurred which upset his well-conceived plan. Pope captured Stuart's adjutant-general[1] with a letter on his person from General Lee to General Stuart, setting forth fully his plans, and making manifest to Pope his position and force, and his determination to overwhelm the army under Pope before it could be reinforced by the Army of the Potomac. This accident Stuart offset partially a few days later, when, in a night attack at Catlett's Station, he captured Pope's head-quarters and effects, including his despatch-book, containing important information throwing light on the strength, movements, and designs of the enemy, and disclosing General Pope's own views against his ability to defend the line of the Rappahannock.[2] But Pope's despatches only made it appear imperative for Lee to attack him before the forces from McClellan and the Shenandoah should join him and make his army overwhelmingly strong. Lee's, on the other hand, enabled Pope to save his army and retire to a position behind the Rappahannock, where he could await these reinforcements.

This "fortunate accident" of the capture of Lee's letter containing his plans saved Pope for the time being. It was a revelation to him, and suddenly aware of the peril of his position, he hastily withdrew behind the Rappahannock, thereby preventing the cutting off of his army from his base of supplies as Lee had planned.

[1] Major Fitzhugh. Pope's report.

[2] General Stuart's report, cited in Taylor's "General Lee."

"This retreat," says Ropes in his history of the campaign, "was made not a day too soon. Pope's army had been, in truth, in an extremely dangerous position. . . . All this is very plain, but apparently it was not seen by General Pope until the capture of one of the officers of Stuart's staff put him in possession of Lee's orders to his army.[1] Lee was greatly disappointed at Pope's escape," continues this able critic,[2] and he proceeds to show how, had Pope not retreated precipitately, he "would have been attacked in flank and rear, and his communications severed into the bargain. Doubtless," he adds, "he would have made a strenuous fight, but defeat under such circumstances might well have been ruin. From this disaster fortune saved Pope through the capture of Stuart's staff officer." [3]

The credit for this brilliant conception of destroying Pope, Henderson rather gives to Jackson; but no matter who originated the idea, the true credit, as he shows in another connection, belongs to him on whom rested the responsibility of the final decision on which hangs the fate of the cause. This decision Lee made, and when he arrived in the Piedmont he held to his decision, though Pope had withdrawn his army to a far more defensible line than when he thought of pursuing Jackson to Gordonsville. Having satisfied himself as to Pope's dispositions, Lee, unswerving in his audacious design, determined to attack him beyond the Rappahannock, where he lay on the

[1] Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," pp. 256, 257.
[2] Lee to Jackson, July 23, 1862, W. R., p. 916.
[3] Ropes, II, pp. 257, 258.

left bank, on both sides of the Orange and Alexandria Railway, awaiting his reinforcements. Thus, while Longstreet was directed to hold his front, Jackson was sent up the stream to cross beyond Pope at some point and turn his right. This plan left Pope between Lee and Richmond, but Lee had no fears on this score; for it left him between Pope and Washington, and if he were successful, Pope would not be trying to capture Richmond, but to save his army. Stuart, under cover of the artillery, forced a passage at Beverly Ford, some miles above the railroad, but was forced to withdraw, and Jackson marched on higher up the river in pursuance of Lee's order, to "seek a more favorable place to cross," and on the afternoon of the 22d reached the Sulphur Springs. A great rain, however, fell that night and raised the river suddenly after he had sent Early with a brigade or two across, leaving them isolated and preventing their relief for several days. This rain, in Ropes's opinion, saved Pope, who was now strictly on the defensive, and was being encouraged by Halleck to "fight like the devil."[1] Meantime Longstreet, on the 23d, drove off the force guarding the railroad bridge at Rappahannock Station and the bridge was burned.

It was after five days spent in trying to reach Pope's right beyond the swollen Rappahannock, that Lee put in operation his famous flank movement by which, holding Pope's front with half his force, he despatched Jackson, together with a part of Stuart's Cavalry, to circle quite around Pope's right and, crossing the Bull

[1] *Ibid.*, II, pp. 259, 260. 16, W. R., pp. 56, 57.

Run Mountains at Thoroughfare Gap, strike his line of communication in his rear. Considering that Pope had under him, on the Rappahannock, an army which, making allowance for all losses, "numbered upward of 70,000 when Lee undertook this novel and perilous operation," one may well agree with Ropes that "the disparity between this force and that of Jackson is so enormous that it is impossible not to be amazed at the audacity of the Confederate general." [1]

Lee, however, was now assured of the withdrawal of McClellan's army as a consequence of his audacious strategy in threatening Washington, and having massed his forces with a view to attacking Pope, he proceeded to carry out his plans, however "novel and perilous," undisturbed by any forebodings. Almost due north of where Pope lay protected by the Rappahannock, beginning a few miles north of Sulphur Springs, just above Pope's right, and running due north and south, lies a range of low mountains, forming an outlying wing of the Blue Ridge. In this range of mountains are several gaps through which wind rough country roads. But most of these gaps lay too near Pope's army to be attempted with any hope of success. One of them, however, lay so far to the northward that it had not been considered necessary to secure it. Lee's plan now was to send Jackson and Stuart around to the westward of this range as far as Thoroughfare Gap, and have them cross the range at this point and attack Pope in the rear, cutting and, if possible, destroying his line of communications. And meanwhile

[1] *Ibid.*, II, pp. 261, 262. Allen, pp. 212, 213.

Longstreet was to keep him occupied and then, stealing away, was to follow Jackson by the same route and join him for the purpose of attack or defence, as circumstances should develop. The plan worked out in a way which has become one of the romantic stories of the history of war. Sending Jackson up the now swollen stream to find a crossing-place well beyond Pope's right, and Longstreet after him to demonstrate in Pope's front and follow Jackson at the proper time, Lee awaited confidently the result of his audacious plan. Jackson withdrew to Jefferson, a few miles south-west of Sulphur Springs, on the evening of the 24th, and Longstreet took his place after dark. Next day, while Longstreet demonstrated as if preparing to cross at Waterloo and Sulphur Springs, Jackson, starting from Jefferson, crossed the river at a point four miles above Waterloo. Keeping to the west of the mountains, he marched twenty-five miles a day, bivouacked at Salem, and pushing forward with "his accustomed vigor and celerity," crossed the Bull Run Mountains at Thoroughfare Gap, and, finding the way clear, headed straight for the line of Pope's communication at the rear of his army. At Gainesville, on the day after he started, he was joined by Stuart with two brigades of cavalry. Here, after a record-making march, about nightfall, on the 26th, while Pope thought he was headed for the valley of the Shenandoah,[1] Jackson, having circled completely around Warrenton, where Pope had his headquarters, struck the railway at Bristoe Station between Pope and the city he was supposed to be covering. Here

[1] 18, W. R., pp. 653, 665.

he destroyed the bridge across Broad Run, which rendered him safe for the time being from an attack from the direction of Warrenton, and then turned his attention to the capture of Pope's great depot of supplies. He despatched Stuart that night with his cavalry and two of Trimble's Regiments, who though they had marched twenty-five miles that day had volunteered for the occasion, to capture Manassas Junction, six miles away, with its vast stores for Pope's army, which was successfully accomplished by midnight, the captures including two batteries of artillery and some 300 prisoners. Next morning, leaving Ewell to guard Bristoe Station, Jackson proceeded to Manassas, where he was joined later by Ewell, who had been forced back from Bristoe Station after a sharp fight, and who brought the information that Pope had turned on him with his full force. That morning Pope had issued orders to abandon the line of the Rappahannock.[1]

Ewell's retreat had far-reaching consequences. Pope at first thought that the attack on Manassas was a mere cavalry raid, and when he learned differently and sent a sufficient force to Bristoe Station to drive Ewell off, he conceived the idea that he had defeated Jackson's whole army. He was afterward to learn that this was an even more fatal mistake than the first. That same night Pope, who appears to have thought that his enemy was delivered into his hands, issued orders for his entire army to concentrate at or near Manassas Junction, and a manifesto that he would "bag the whole crowd." Jackson had other views.

[1] 16, W. R., pp. 34, 70. Ropes, II, p. 266.

Lee's plan had not stopped at the destruction of Pope's supplies. He proposed also the destruction of his army. If Pope should be allowed to retire on Washington and await the arrival of McClellan's army, the chief object of his daring move would have been frustrated. This Jackson understood. Having now refreshed his men, he proposed to carry out the main purpose of his perilous move. While Pope was concentrating to bag him at Manassas, Jackson, under cover of darkness, left that point, and marching up Bull Run beyond where Sigel lay to participate in the work of bagging him, moved on the night of the 27th to the westward of the turnpike and took a position in the woods near Groveton, where he could await Longstreet's arrival by way of Thoroughfare Gap, or himself retire through either this gap or Aldie Gap, to the northward, should necessity arise. His army comprised only about 18,000 men, but it was a fighting force unexcelled in history.

On the afternoon of the 28th, Jackson, lying in the hills near Groveton, almost surrounded by Pope's army, learned that a large force was moving down the turnpike toward Centreville, where Pope had finally determined to concentrate. This was King's division of McDowell's command, which was on its way to help bag him at Manassas. He immediately sprang upon them, and the result was one of the most obstinately contested of the minor fields of the war.[1] The losses on both sides were heavy; for on both sides the men fought from start to finish with extraordinary gallantry.

[1] Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson," II, p. 149.

The Confederate losses were the heaviest, however, and among the 1,200 or more casualties was the gallant old Ewell, who was desperately wounded. Pope, obsessed with the idea that Jackson was trying to escape, issued an order stating that McDowell had intercepted his retreat, and with Sigel on his front he could not escape. That night, however, the Federals withdrew and retired toward Manassas, and next day it was known that Pope "had taken a position to cover Washington against Jackson's advance." Strategically, however, the engagement was decisive. Jackson had brought on the fight with the view of drawing the whole Federal army on himself, and he was entirely successful.[1] Thus, this part of Lee's plan had been completely carried out. Jackson, knowing that there was stern work ahead of him, now posted himself in a defensive position partially protected by the line of an unfinished railway extending north-eastwardly from the Warrenton Turnpike, and awaited Longstreet (with whom was Lee himself), who, having been relieved by R. H. Anderson, had crossed the river at Hinson's Mill, the same point where Jackson had crossed several days before, and was pushing forward for Thoroughfare Gap, which he reached on the afternoon of the 28th. Ricketts had been posted here till he was ordered away to help bag Jackson, but a force still occupied the Gap. Finding the Gap in possession of the enemy, Longstreet was forced to carry it by assault, and did not reach Jackson till the following afternoon. But though he had been

[1] Allan, p. 231. Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson," II, pp. 179, 235. Ropes, II, p. 272.

delayed, he was in time for the final struggle, and Lee's masterly strategy was justified. It was well that he had carried the pass, for Pope had brought up all his army to crush Jackson. It is agreed that the removal of Ricketts' command from the Gap to help bag Jackson was a cardinal error. Lee had had tidings from Jackson as late as the 26th, saying that he was able to maintain himself till support should arrive. But he knew the peril of his position, and he was eager to relieve him. As he now with Longstreet's command emerged from the Gap next morning (29th) the sound of the guns toward Manassas, twelve miles away, told that the battle was on and that Jackson was fighting for his life. It, however, told precisely where Jackson was, and this guided them to the field where Pope's army, now being massed for his destruction, was being led against his well-chosen position. Jackson fought along the line of an unfinished railway embankment, with his artillery on a ridge behind him, his left secured by Bull Run and by Stuart's Cavalry, his right by the cavalry and the commanding artillery posted behind him. Hill was on his left in three lines, Ewell's Division on his centre and right. The battle began by an attack on his centre and left about seven o'clock, and from this time till sunset it raged along the whole field.

Pushing forward by Gainesville, Longstreet moved to Jackson's right, where Porter, guarding the enemy's left, lay beyond him to his right. The battle had been raging for hours when Lee reached the field. Sigel, eager to settle old Valley scores, was striving to hold Jackson in check until Pope could concentrate his full

force to destroy him. His attack on Jackson's left, fierce as it was, had failed, though once for a short space Hill's first line had been broken, and it required all his reserves to re-establish it. Hooker had now come up on Pope's right with Kearny and Reno—some 18,000 men, fresh and full of fight—and McDowell and Porter were ordered to come in on his left and roll up Jackson's centre and right and thus sweep the field. This Pope, who had now taken personal command, had no doubt of being able to do. He reckoned, however, without his host. Lee had now come up with Longstreet, and Jackson knew that his long-cherished design had reached fulfilment. Other corps were soon put in, and for hours the battle raged "with incessant fury and varying success, but Jackson stubbornly held his ground, though the fighting was often hand to hand and the bayonet was in constant requisition." [1] In all this fighting Longstreet took little part, though Lee himself three times expressed to him his wish that he should attack and thus relieve the hard-pressed Jackson. As General Lee did not positively order him in, he determined to wait and attack next day, should a weak place be found in the enemy's lines, and he left Jackson and Hill to hold their position alone, except for the aid afforded them by a reconnoissance in force by three gallant brigades—Hood's and Evans's, with Wilcox in support. The command of Fitz John Porter, numbering some 10,000 men, lay near Gainesville, deployed to engage any force in their front, and Longstreet thought the enemy was marching on him from

[1] Taylor's "General Lee," p. 106.

the rear and failed to press in to Jackson's aid. When evening fell Porter's menace had held Longstreet back from the counterstroke which Lee had desired to give, and he could not have done more had he attempted to carry out Pope's urgent last order. Thus Porter, notwithstanding the stern charges made against him later and their fatal result, fully performed his task.[1] Lee knew next morning that he need not deliver the attack he had contemplated—that Pope would save him the trouble. Fortunately for Lee, he knew also that Pope thought Jackson was in a perilous position and was anxious only to escape, and he disposed his troops to take advantage of this erroneous view, which he did completely. Pope, who, notwithstanding five successive repulses and the loss of some 8,000 men, claimed to have won the battle of the evening before, was still laboring under "the strange hallucination" that Jackson was in full retreat, and he massed his army to destroy or "bag" him, giving McDowell the "general charge of the pursuit." Such a pursuit was never known before or since. He did not believe that Longstreet had arrived, though Porter had warned him of the fact, and while he was informed that troops had passed through Thoroughfare Gap the day before, he was confident that they were Jackson's troops in retreat. He had now some 65,000 men directly under his hand, and he not unnaturally felt able to crush any force opposed to him. Accordingly, having placed his army in a position to sweep the whole field at once, he, about noon, gave the order to advance.

[1] Ropes, II, p. 281.

Porter had been moved over to the right, and Reynolds was on the left facing Longstreet. Pope was certain of victory and moved deliberately. Thus, it was afternoon before Pope's gallant lines advanced to the attack along the Warrenton Pike, with Porter leading against Jackson's front in such force that Jackson called on Lee for reinforcements. Lee immediately ordered General Longstreet in, and his whole line became engaged from Jackson's left, stretching to Bull Run, on the north of the turnpike, to Stuart's Hill, on the south, where Longstreet's right extended, with Stuart on his right. The guns massed behind swept the open space before Lee's lines and made them a field of death. Supposing still that the force in front was but a part of Jackson's army left to guard his retreat, Pope was taken by surprise when from the railway an army arose and poured a deadly fire on his advancing ranks. But never did brave men meet braver. Driven back by the deadly blast, the assailants rallied again and again till five assaults had been made. The fighting was from this time furious. Line after line came on under the leaden sleet with a courage which aroused the admiration of their antagonists and called for the utmost exertion to repel them. But mortal flesh could not stand against the rain of shot and shell poured down on the brigades "piling up against Jackson's right, centre, and left," [1] and they melted away in the fiery furnace. "Their repeated efforts to rally were," as Lee reported, "unavailing, and Jackson's troops, being thus relieved from the pressure of overwhelming num-

[1] Lee's report, Taylor's "General Lee," pp. 112, 113.

bers, began to press steadily forward, driving the enemy before them." As they retreated in confusion Lee ordered a general advance; but "Longstreet, anticipating the order for a general advance, now threw his whole command against the Federal centre and left, and the whole line swept steadily on, driving the enemy with great carnage from each successive position." It is a modest and uncolored report of the general movements made by the victorious commander. The victory viewed in the light of all the facts was one of the most complete in all the war. "As Porter rolled back from Jackson's front," says Henderson, "the hand of a great captain snatched control of the battle from Pope." Lee had seen his opportunity and thrown his whole army on the retreating foe in one supreme and masterly counterstroke. The result was a victory, complete and overwhelming.

Yet, even thus, Pope "with an audacity which disaster was powerless to tame," reported to Halleck that "the enemy was badly whipped," and that he had "moved back because he was largely outnumbered," and his army was without food. In fact, Pope's army was in rout; when Franklin arrived on the 30th, he found it necessary to throw a division across the road between Centreville and Bull Run to stop the "indiscriminate mass of men, horse, and guns, and wagons, all going pell-mell to the rear. Officers of all grades," he states, "from brigadier-generals down, were in the throng." When McClellan took charge on the 2d he placed the stragglers at 20,000, and Halleck's messenger placed them at 30,000.

Thus by Lee's "novel and perilous movement," carried out to complete success, was won the great battle of Second Manassas, which completed the campaign by which he relieved Richmond.

With 50,000 men he had routed and driven Pope from his menacing position with (as Ropes states) 70,000 men, as gallant as any soldiers in the world, captured more than 9,000 prisoners, 30 pieces of artillery, upward of 20,000 stand of small arms, numerous colors, and a large amount of stores.[1]

During the night Pope withdrew to the north side of Bull Run and occupied a strong position on the heights about Centreville. But by this time the hunter had become the hunted. Lee, driving for the fruits of his dearly won victory, ordered Jackson to push forward around Pope's right, while Longstreet engaged him in front, and Pope, now thoroughly demoralized, retired first on Fairfax Court House, and after a sharp engagement with Jackson at Chantilly, to the secure shelter of the formidable forts at Alexandria. Lee says in his report that "it was found that the enemy had conducted his retreat so rapidly that the attempt to interfere with him was abandoned. The proximity of the fortifications around Alexandria and Washington rendered further pursuit useless." In this last fight the brave Kearny was killed. Having ridden into the Confederate lines by accident, he was shot as he attempted to escape.

[1] Lee's report, cited in Taylor's "General Lee," p. 117. The Federal losses were 1,738 killed and 10,135 wounded. Confederate losses, 1,090 killed and 6,154 wounded. Pope had certainly over 70,000 men. See Ropes, cited *ante*. Henderson places his forces at 80,000.

"Lee, with his extraordinary insight into character," says Henderson,[1] "had played on Pope as he had played on McClellan, and his strategy was justified by success. In the space of three weeks he had carried the war from the James to the Potomac; with an army that at no time exceeded 55,000 men, he had driven 80,000 men into the fortifications of Washington." It was a proof of Pope's utter demoralization that he telegraphed that unless something were "done to restore the tone of his army, it would melt away," and that he attacked as the cause of his disaster the gallant Fitz John Porter with a vehemence which might better have been employed on the field of Manassas, and placed on this fine soldier and honorable gentleman a stigma which it took a generation to extirpate.

In any event, it was the end of the gascon, Pope. He was transferred to the North-west to hold the Indians in awe, and before a great while resigned. Such was the fruit of Lee's bold generalship, and he was now to give a yet further proof of his audacity and skill.

[1] "Life of Stonewall Jackson," II, p. 187.

## CHAPTER IX

### LEE'S AUDACITY—ANTIETAM AND CHANCELLORSVILLE

Lee's move against Pope was not merely the boldest, and possibly the most masterly, piece of strategy in the whole war; it was, as has been well said, "one of the most brilliant and daring movements in the history of wars." He was already beginning to be confronted by the enemy before which his victorious legions were finally to succumb. The region which had hitherto been the seat of war had been swept so clean and the means of transportation had become so unreliable that it was necessary for the subsistence of his army, if for no other reason, to shift the field of operations. But though the South had lost a year in its refusal to do more than defend its own borders, the exigencies of war made it apparent that this theory must be abandoned if success were to be sought. Another motive also now operated with Lee. Three armies had been defeated, and the only reply that the Union Government had made had been to call for more troops from her inexhaustible resources. It was possible that a victorious invasion of the North might force the North to make peace. Such a move might bring about the recognition of the Southern Confederacy by Great Britain and France, and this would open her ports and give her access to the world. Or it might compel the

North to make peace. But the immediate cause operating with Lee was the necessity to relieve Virginia and subsist his men. Accordingly he did not pause to enjoy his victory. His army was wellnigh shoeless, and the South was unable to help him. Need became the handmaid of strategy. He was nearer to Washington than to Richmond. Maryland lay the other side of Pope's army. He would place that army and the other armies also between him and Richmond. He determined to march around Pope's army and invade Maryland to subsist his army and relieve Virginia, and to give Maryland the power to join the Southern Confederacy, which it was believed she longed to do.

Lee, therefore, who, as we have seen, had, in the beginning of the war, held that the South should act strictly on the defensive, now, after the war had proceeded for more than a year, reached a different conclusion. For what appeared good reasons, he made up his mind that he should advance into Maryland. Probably he felt that Maryland was properly a part of the South, and he so indicates in his correspondence. Before taking this step, however, he wrote the following letter to President Davis, giving him his reasons for the move:

HEAD-QUARTERS, ALEXANDRIA AND LEESBURG ROAD,
NEAR DRANESVILLE, *September* 3, 1862.

HIS EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT DAVIS.

*Mr. President:* The present seems to be the most propitious time since the commencement of the war for the Confederate army to enter Maryland. The two grand armies of the United States that have been operating in Virginia, though now united, are much weakened

and demoralized. Their new levies, of which I understand 60,000 men have already been posted in Washington, are not yet organized, and will take some time to prepare for the field. If it is ever desired to give material aid to Maryland and afford her an opportunity of throwing off the oppression to which she is now subject, this would seem the most favorable.

After the enemy had disappeared from the vicinity of Fairfax Court House and taken the road to Alexandria and Washington, I did not think it would be advantageous to follow him farther. I had no intention of attacking him in his fortifications, and am not prepared to invest them. If I possessed the necessary munitions, I should be unable to supply provisions for the troops. I therefore determined, while threatening the approaches to Washington, to draw the troops into Loudoun, where forage and some provisions can be obtained, menace their possession of the Shenandoah Valley, and, if found practicable, to cross into Maryland. The purpose, if discovered, will have the effect of carrying the enemy north of the Potomac, and if prevented will not result in much evil.

The army is not properly equipped for an invasion of an enemy's territory. It lacks much of the material of war, is feeble in transportation, the animals being much reduced, and the men are poorly provided with clothes, and in thousands of instances are destitute of shoes. Still, we cannot afford to be idle, and, though weaker than our opponents in men and military equipments, must endeavor to harass if we cannot destroy them. I am aware that the movement is attended with much risk, yet I do not consider success impossible, and shall endeavor to guard it from loss. As long as the army of the enemy are employed on this frontier I have no fears for the safety of Richmond, yet I earnestly recommend that advantage be taken of this period of

comparative safety to place its defence, both by land and water, in the most perfect condition. A respectable force can be collected to defend its approaches by land, and the steamer *Richmond*, I hope, is now ready to clear the river of hostile vessels.

Should General Bragg find it impracticable to operate to advantage on his present frontier, his army, after leaving sufficient garrisons, could be advantageously employed in opposing the overwhelming numbers which it seems to be the intention of the enemy now to concentrate in Virginia.

I have already been told by prisoners that some of Buell's cavalry have been joined to General Pope's army, and have reason to believe that the whole of McClellan's, the larger portion of Burnside's and Cox's, and a portion of Hunter's are united to it.

What occasions me most concern is the fear of getting out of ammunition. I beg you will instruct the Ordnance Department to spare no pains in manufacturing a sufficient amount of the best kind, and to be particular, in preparing that for the artillery, to provide three times as much of the long-range ammunition as of that for smooth-bore or short-range guns. The points to which I desire the ammunition to be forwarded will be made known to the department in time. If the Quartermaster's Department can furnish any shoes, it would be the greatest relief. We have entered upon September, and the nights are becoming cool.

I have the honor to be, with high respect, your obedient servant,

R. E. Lee, *General.*

Another motive also operated with Lee in causing him to advance into Maryland. He desired peace, and he felt now as he felt when he again crossed the Potomac

in the following year that such a move might lead to peace with honor. On the 8th of September he wrote President Davis the following letter:

HEAD-QUARTERS, NEAR FREDERICKTOWN, MD.,
*September* 8, 1862.

HIS EXCELLENCY, JEFFERSON DAVIS,
*President of the Confederate States, Richmond, Va.*

*Mr. President:* The present position of affairs, in my opinion, places it in the power of the government of the Confederate States to propose with propriety to that of the United States the recognition of our independence. For more than a year both sections of the country have been devastated by hostilities which have brought sorrow and suffering upon thousands of homes without advancing the objects which our enemies proposed to themselves in beginning the contest. Such a proposition, coming from us at this time, could in no way be regarded as suing for peace, but, being made when it is in our power to inflict injury upon our adversary, would show conclusively to the world that our sole object is the establishment of our independence and the attainment of an honorable peace. The rejection of this offer would prove to the country that the responsibility of the continuance of the war does not rest upon us, but that the party in power in the United States elect to prosecute it for purposes of their own. The proposal of peace would enable the people of the United States to determine at their coming elections whether they will support those who favor a prolongation of the war or those who wish to bring it to a termination which can but be productive of good to both parties without affecting the honor of either.

I have the honor to be, with high respect, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE, *General.*

On the 2d of September, amid the gloom cast by Pope's disastrous defeat, McClellan was requested by Mr. Lincoln to take command of the defence of Washington, and at once took command of Pope's shattered army. On the same day Lee issued his order to cross the Potomac, and, screened by Stuart's Cavalry, Jackson, whose corps was to form the advance, headed for the fords above Leesburg. It had been hoped, as Lee's letters show, that Maryland would rise and declare for the South. Maryland did not respond. Her population who espoused the cause of the South lay mainly to the eastward. Her western population were affected by the proximity to the mountain population of Virginia. However, her Legislature had been arrested, and the machinery of her government had been thrown out of gear. Henderson suggests a further reason for this indifference on the part of her people in the uninviting appearance of Lee's ragged soldiery. Moreover, they were accustomed to the Federal occupation, and it was a hazardous experiment to side actively with the South unless she should first show herself able to protect them. Lee issued a proclamation on the 8th, calling on the people to rise and enjoy once more the inalienable rights of freemen; but assuring them that no constraint would be put on them by his army and no intimidation would be allowed. He declared it was for them to decide their destiny freely and without restraint, and that his army would respect their choice, whatever it might be.[1] Thus reassured, Maryland remained quiescent. Those who espoused the South's

[1] F. Lee's "Lee," p. 198.

cause had long since crossed the border and shed their blood on many a hard-fought field. The remainder continued neutral. This, however, was not the cause of Lee's failure. That he did not reap the full fruits of this wonderful generalship was due to one of those strange events which, so insignificant in itself, yet under Him who

> "Views with equal eye, as God of All,
> A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,"

is fateful to decide the issues of nations. McClellan moved to Frederick, on the east side of South Mountain, two days after Lee crossed to the westward. As the capture of Lee's letter and plans had given Pope warning and led him to retire his army behind the Rappahannock in time to save it, so now an even stranger fate befell Lee. A copy of his despatch giving his entire plan was picked up at Frederick, wrapped about a handful of cigars, on the site of a camp formerly occupied by D. H. Hill, and promptly reached McClellan, thus betraying to him a plan which but for this strange accident might have resulted in the complete overthrow of his army, and even in the capture of the national capital, and enabling him with his vast resources to frustrate it. A man's carelessness usually reacts mainly upon himself, but few incidents in the history of the world have ever been fraught with such fateful consequences as that act of the unknown staff officer or courier who chose Lee's plan of battle as a wrapping for his tobacco.

"If we always had exact information of our enemy's dispositions," said Frederick, "we should beat him every time." This exact information this strange mishap gave to Lee's adversary on the eve of Antietam. Even so, Lee, who fought the battle with only 35,000 men, came off with more glory than his antagonist, who had 87,000,[1] as gallant men, moreover, as ever braved death, and the latter was a little later removed by his government as a failure, while Lee stood higher than ever in the affection and esteem of the South. Lee's plan was to march into Maryland to the west of Washington, and inclining to the northeastward, threaten at once Baltimore and Washington, and incidentally Pennsylvania. His first objective was Hagerstown, Md., an important junction point due north of Harper's Ferry. It was expected that this line of march would naturally clear the Shenandoah Valley of the troops which had been harrying it. It had been supposed that as soon as this move was made the troops garrisoning Harper's Ferry, numbering some 10,000 men, would be withdrawn, as Johnston had done when Patterson moved south in 1861. When the commander at Harper's Ferry still held on, it became necessary to dislodge or capture him. Lee decided on the latter course and despatched Jackson to capture him, while he pushed on into Maryland.

His disposition of his forces, which McClellan got information of on the 13th of September, was as follows:

[1] General Lee told Fitz Lee that he fought the battle of Sharpsburg with 35,000 troops. And McClellan reported that he himself had 87,164 troops. (Fitzhugh Lee's "Life of Lee," p. 209.) *Cf.* also Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," II, pp. 376, 377.

Jackson, whose troops formed the advance, was to turn off from the Hagerstown Road after passing Middletown, take the Sharpsburg Road, cross the Potomac at the most convenient place, and by Friday night (September 12) seize the Baltimore and Ohio Railway, round up and capture the troops at Martinsburg to the west of Harper's Ferry—some 3,000 men—and then proceed to capture Harper's Ferry itself. Longstreet was to proceed to Boonsboro, on the Hagerstown Road; McLaws was to follow him to Middletown and then, following Jackson, with his own and Anderson's Divisions was to seize the Maryland Heights, commanding Harper's Ferry, by Friday night, and proceed to aid in the capture of Harper's Ferry. General Walker, with his division, was to seize Loudoun Heights on the south side of the Shenandoah River, and as far as practicable co-operate with Jackson and McLaws in intercepting the retreat of the enemy. General D. H. Hill's Division was to form the rear guard of the main army. Stuart was to send detachments of cavalry with these troops, and with the main body of his cavalry was to cover the route of the main army and bring up stragglers. After the capture of Harper's Ferry the troops engaged there were to join the main army.

It will be seen that Lee had no doubt whatever of the success of his undertaking. Both he and Jackson knew Harper's Ferry and the surrounding country, and his plan, so simple and yet so complete, was laid out with a precision as absolute as if formed on the ground instead of on the march in a new country. It was this order showing the dispersion of his army over twenty-odd

miles of country, with a river flowing between its widely scattered parts, that by a strange fate fell into McClellan's hands.

Lee's order was discovered and delivered to McClellan on the 13th, and McClellan at once set himself to the task of meeting the situation by relieving Harper's Ferry on the one hand and crushing Lee's army in detail among the passes of the Maryland Spurs. Lee, however, had, through the good offices of a friendly citizen who had been present at or had learned of the delivery of his despatch to McClellan, soon become aware of the misfortune that had befallen him, and while McClellan was preparing to destroy him, he was taking prompt measures to repair the damage as fully as possible. He promptly informed his lieutenants and instantly recalled Longstreet from Hagerstown, ordered Hill back to Turner's Gap and Stuart to Crampton Gap, five miles south, to defend them against McClellan's expected advance, a disposition which delayed the enemy until the evening of the 14th, when, after fierce fighting, they carried both positions, forcing McLaws back from Crampton Gap to Pleasant Valley, across which, however, he established "a formidable line of defence." Lee was thus forced to choose between two alternatives—either to retreat across the Potomac or to fight where he had not contemplated fighting. He seems to have wavered momentarily which course to adopt, and well he might waver. It was a perilous situation. He had with him, by the highest computation, when the gaps were stormed on the afternoon of the 14th, only about 19,000 men in

all,[1] "while the main army of McClellan was close upon him." He issued an order that night (8 P. M.) to McLaws to cross the Potomac below Shepherdstown, leaving the ford at Shepherdstown for the main army to take. "But in less than two hours Lee had changed his mind—why we are not informed" —says Ropes, "and had determined to await battle north of the Potomac." By midnight he had planned his battle; he had ordered the cavalry to pilot McLaws over the mountains and across country to Sharpsburg, where he had determined to make his stand on the east of Antietam Creek. He had also taken measures to bring up his other troops as rapidly as possible. "This decision," says Ropes, "to stand and fight at Sharpsburg, which General Lee took on the evening of the 14th of September—just after his troops had been driven from the South Mountain passes—is beyond controversy one of the boldest and most hazardous decisions in his whole military career. It is, in truth, so bold and hazardous that one is bewildered that he could even have thought seriously of making it." [2]

Lee's decision was, indeed, so bold and hazardous that the thoughtful Ropes suggests that he must have been influenced by fear of loss of his military prestige. "General Lee, however," he admits, "thought there was a fair chance for him to win a victory over McClellan," [3] and he adds that "naturally he did not consider them [McClellan's troops] as good as his own, and it is

[1] Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," II, p. 347.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 351, 352.
[3] *Ibid.*, II, p. 349.

without doubt that they did not constitute so good an army as that which he commanded."

We have seen what his motives were on crossing over into Maryland. His design now was to cover McLaws's rear at Harper's Ferry, prevent the relief of that place, draw his army together in a strong, defensive position, and await McClellan's attack. We know, however, that while Longstreet (as usual) suggested the obstacles and dangers of the situation, Jackson approved the action of Lee both before and after the battle.[1]

The eastern range of the Blue Ridge in Maryland follows the general trend of the Appalachians from south-west to north-east, and north of the Potomac are known as the South Mountains. To the westward lies a rolling country with pleasant valleys through which wind small streams which flow southward into the Potomac. Up these valleys and up the ridges which divide them wind the roads northward, which Lee was following when he learned of the mishap that had befallen him in the discovery of his plans. It was a perilous situation, for McClellan with 80,000 troops lay on the other side of the South Mountain at Frederick, within a day's march of his small force, and the passes were defended by only D. H. Hill's Division and the cavalry; while Longstreet was at Hagerstown, twelve miles beyond Boonsboro, and Jackson with Walker and McLaws was still engaged in the work of capturing Harper's Ferry, on the other side of the Potomac. The stoutest heart might well have quailed. But Lee stood firm. He knew both Jackson and

[1] Lee's letter to Mrs. Jackson, January 15, 1866.

McClellan, and he acted with undaunted resolution. Instead of retreating across the Potomac as Longstreet suggested, he ordered the passes of the South Mountain to be defended, recalled Longstreet to his aid, and retiring to a position on the Antietam, prepared for battle with the Potomac at his back, while he awaited Jackson. Fortunately for Lee, his surmise based on McClellan's known caution proved correct. McClellan did not attack the troops posted in the passes until afternoon on the 14th, the day that Jackson invested Harper's Ferry, and then he threw the bulk of his force, 70,000 men, against the northernmost gap, and the one nearest Longstreet, so that by the time his attack became general—four o'clock—Longstreet had reached the field, and at nightfall Turner's Gap was still in Lee's possession. The Southern Gap, known as Crampton's Gap, defended by the gallant Munford with only his cavalry, dismounted, and a regiment of infantry, had been carried at five o'clock by Franklin, and that night Franklin, established at the top of the mountain, might with reasonable assistance have commanded the direct line of communication between Lee and Jackson. That night, however, Longstreet and Hill abandoned Turner's Gap, their position being no longer tenable, and fell back to Sharpsburg above the Antietam, and Franklin was held at bay by McLaws's bold front and called for reinforcements though the latter had only six brigades in line, not over 6,000 men, to Franklin's 20,000.[1] The losses of the Confederates on this day were in all about

[1] Allan, p. 364.

3,400 men, while of the Federals they were probably a thousand less. Jackson, Walker, and McLaws had been ordered that afternoon by Lee to join him. Jackson's reply was sent next day in the form of an announcement that, "through God's blessing, Harper's Ferry and its garrison were to be surrendered," and that, leaving Hill, whose troops had borne the heaviest part in the engagement, in command, the other troops would march that evening, as soon as they could get their rations.

It should be said that Jackson completely performed the part assigned to him, as did all who had gone with him. Circling Harper's Ferry, he rounded up the troops at Martinsburg, drove them into Harper's Ferry, which he had already invested on the north and east, and then, following them, proceeded to reduce the place with such success that on the morning of the 15th, after a fierce bombardment, he had the satisfaction of seizing the town—the white flag being hoisted at the moment his infantry was forming for the assault. By this capture he took 12,500 men, 13,000 small arms, 73 pieces of artillery, and some hundreds of wagons. Having accomplished this feat in accordance with Lee's plans, and waiting only to fill his men's haversacks, he set out to join Lee, lying in front of McClellan's army, which, as stated, had stormed and carried the gaps of the South Mountain in front of him the evening before. They marched all night, forded the Potomac and, while McClellan paltered and reconnoitred and waited to get his whole great army through the passes of the South Mountain, they limped on to the field

on the morning of the 16th like a weary pack after a killing chase and added 11,000 worn but victorious troops to the 15,000 or 16,000 men whom McClellan's imagination had magnified into a great army. Thirteen thousand men of Lee's army were still at Harper's Ferry, and every hour of delay was precious for him.

The passes of the South Mountain having been carried while Jackson was closing in on Harper's Ferry, twenty miles away, General Lee on the night of the 14th withdrew his army across Antietam Creek and assumed a position which he thought stronger, along a range of hills on the east side of the Hagerstown Turnpike, with his right resting on Antietam Creek and his left refused across the turnpike some three miles to the northward, this turnpike being a line of communication between the two wings by which he could support either when hard pressed. His position was a strong one for defence. The ridge on which he lay faced the Antietam lying in its deep ravine, and commanded the slopes in front, and all but one of the crossings of the creeks. He had no time for entrenchments, but his men were protected partly by stone walls or fences and partly by outcropping ledges of limestone and belts of forest. The right rested on a spur which lifted above the Antietam, the left on Nicodemus Run, near the Potomac, with a protecting wood just behind. The issue proved that the line had been chosen with a soldier's eye. Thus ensconced, he waited for Jackson, who on the morning of the same day (the 15th) had, as already stated, captured Harper's Ferry, with its garrison, munitions, and stores, and, leaving A. P. Hill in charge, set out in haste at night-

fall to reinforce Lee, who was confronting McClellan. Happily for Lee, McClellan was still seeing shadows. He waited to make everything sure.[1]

McClellan's army, with whom Lee's cavalry had been so effectively skirmishing as to retard the advance all the forenoon, appeared in his front in the early afternoon of the 15th, and Ropes declares that it was an "unique opportunity" that was offered the Union general. McClellan, however, as he had written Halleck on the night of the 13th, still believed that Lee had at least 100,000 men under his command, and he knew how ably that army, whatever its numbers, was commanded. Lee's very boldness was his salvation. Had he shown a less dauntless front McClellan would have destroyed him. As it was, McClellan could not imagine that with less than a sixth of the force which had swept him from the mountain passes, Lee would stand for battle with a river at his back. Moreover, he believed that his own army was still not fully recovered from the demoralization it had suffered from under Pope. The Army of the Potomac, he declared later, "was thoroughly exhausted by the desperate fighting and severe marching in the unhealthy regions of the Chickahominy, and afterward during the second Bull Run campaign." He held that "nothing but sheer necessity justified the advance of the Army of the Potomac to South Mountain and Antietam in its then condition." [2] His idea was, as he has written, to force Lee back across the Potomac, but not to risk losing

[1] Ropes, II, pp. 354, 355.
[2] "Battles and Leaders," II, p. 564.

a battle which, lost, might lose Washington. He was, therefore, more than ordinarily inclined to be cautious. Accordingly, although his army was now spread out on the slopes above the left bank of the Antietam in full view of Lee, and his artillery engaged in a brief duel with Lee's guns posted above the right bank, it was not until next day (the 16th) that he made any demonstrations against Lee. Meantime Jackson was pushing forward all that night, and on the morning of the 16th he arrived with all of his army who could march, the remainder of them, barefooted and lame, being left behind. But these, alike with those who could march, were flushed with victory.

McClellan now proposed, if possible, to destroy Lee, Lee proposed to receive McClellan's assault, and, if opportunity presented itself, to deal him at the right moment a counterstroke which should destroy him. McClellan had by his report 87,000 men and 275 guns on the field; Lee had less than 36,000 after his last regiment arrived.

Lee's troops were posted, with Longstreet commanding his right and centre and Jackson his left, with Hood in support, his cavalry guarding the wings, while McClellan, in disposing his forces, had placed Hooker on his extreme right with the First Corps, Sumner next on his right with two corps, the Second and Twelfth, then Porter with the Fifth Corps occupying his centre, and Burnside on the left with the Ninth Corps, all good troops and bravely led. That afternoon, in pursuance of McClellan's plan, Hooker was ordered to cross the Antietam and assault Lee's left,

and crossing the stream his corps assaulted the portion of the line held by Hood, but was "gallantly repulsed." The only effect of this assault is declared by Ropes to have been the disclosure of McClellan's plans.[1] It at least informed Lee where to look for the attack next day. That night Mansfield, with the Twelfth Corps, followed Hooker across the Antietam and waited for dawn.

The real battle of Sharpsburg was fought on the 17th, and was the bloodiest battle of the war, a battle in which intrepid courage marked both sides, shining alike in the furious charges of the men who assaulted Lee's lines and the undaunted constancy of the men who defended them. It began early in the morning, as expected, with an attack by Hooker's corps, under such gallant commanders as Meade, Doubleday, and Ricketts; the first shock falling on Ewell's Division in Jackson's wing, and within the deadly hour of the first onslaught, General J. R. Jones, commanding Jackson's old division, was borne from the field, to be followed immediately by Starke, who succeeded him in command, mortally wounded; Colonel Douglass, commanding Lawton's Brigade, was killed; General Lawton, commanding a division, and Colonel Walker, commanding a brigade, were severely wounded. More than half of the brigades of Lawton and Hays were either killed or wounded, and more than a third of Trimble's, and all of the regimental commanders in those brigades, except two, were killed or wounded.[2] "The corn in a field of thirty acres was cut as close

[1] Ropes, II, pp. 358, 359.
[2] *Ibid.*, II, p. 359, citing Jackson's report, 27, W. R., p. 956.

as if cut by the sickle, and the dead lay piled in regular ranks along the whole Confederate front." In this extremity, Hood's Brigades and three of D. H. Hill's Brigades were rushed to the front in support of the exhausted divisions of Jones and Lawton, and after an hour of furious fighting, Hooker's force, led by himself with Doubleday, Ricketts, and Meade, gallant commanders of gallant divisions, were beaten off, with Hooker himself wounded and over 2,500 men dead or wounded. It was a terrific opening of a terrific day. As they retired, Mansfield's corps, 8,500 muskets, came in on their left, and in the furious onslaught on the already shattered brigades of D. H. Hill and Hood, bore them back across the turnpike, "with loss of some 1,700 men out of the 7,000 brought into action," and an even heavier loss on the Confederate side. But beyond the turnpike the remnants of Jones's Division under Grigsby, reinforced by Early, who had succeeded the wounded Lawton in command of Ewell's Division, "clung obstinately" to their ground,[1] and Stuart's Artillery shattered the charging lines. Lee knew the work before him and recognized the need of holding back at all hazards these assaulting columns. From his post on an eminence near his centre his eagle eye had seen the crux of the fight, and while McClellan's columns were spread beyond the Antietam opposite his right and centre, he despatched McLaws and Walker from his right to aid their old comrades. So far Lee's left had suffered terribly, and only the supreme courage of the men—rank and file—had saved Lee's army.

[1] Ropes, II, pp. 361, 362.

Along the left so thin was the line that Stuart, always resourceful, had employed the expedient of posting standards at intervals behind the ridge, so that they could be seen above the crest, and gathering up the stragglers, he formed them into a body of sharp-shooters, and, taking personal command himself, led them forward, transforming them from a lot of shirkers into a band of heroes.[1] It was at this point that Lee was approached by a captain of artillery, who, having had three of his four guns disabled, asked for instructions, and having told him to take his other gun in, found that his own son was one of the gunners.

A brief lull now took place, which was broken by the advance of Sumner, with two divisions, 18,000 men, pushing hotly across the turnpike in three lines against the Confederate left, his veteran troops cheering and being cheered, confident of sweeping everything before them. It was a perilous moment, for Hill and Hood and Early had been terribly shattered, however "obstinately they clung to their ground," and Sedgwick's and Richardson's troops were fresh and game. Beyond the turnpike, however, they came on the remnants of Jackson's Divisions, lying behind a rocky ledge, who gave them a staggering reception. And at this moment the divisions of McLaws and Walker, who had been sent by Lee from his right, came up, and, under Jackson's orders, who rode himself to meet McLaws and direct him to attack and turn the enemy's flank, they deployed across Sumner's and Sedgwick's flank and poured forth on them a

[1] "Story of a Cannoneer Under Stonewall Jackson," p. 151.

fire so "terrible and sustained" that, after a futile effort to change front, the Federals broke and fell back in confusion under the shelter of their artillery, with a loss of over 2,200, officers and men, all within a few minutes.[1] It was the crucial point of the battle. Had Sumner been able to sweep over Jackson's exhausted divisions, Lee's army would have been destroyed. They had already given back under the terrific onslaught of superior numbers and arms, and a gap had been made in Jackson's line when the reinforcements arrived. "God has been very kind to us this day," said Stonewall Jackson, as he rode with McLaws on the heels of his victorious soldiery, who were sweeping Sedgwick from the ridge they had gained at such cost.

This act of Lee in reinforcing his left wing from his right at this critical juncture, Ropes praises as exhibiting remarkable "skill and resolution." An effort made to press Sedgwick's defeated troops, who reformed behind their artillery, was repulsed by the artillery and Smith's brigade, which had just come up and saved Sedgwick; but not until thirty-nine and one-half per cent of McLaws's Division had fallen. A little later the remnants of Jones's and Lawton's troops drove the enemy from the ground they had secured in the second assault. But by this time all the Confederate troops in that part of the field had sustained terrific losses. Says Henderson, from whom and Ropes much of this account is taken: "30,500 in-

[1] Henderson, II, p. 252, citing Palfrey, "The Antietam and Fredericksburg," p. 87.

fantry at the lowest calculation, and probably 100 guns, besides those across the Antietam—eight divisions of infantry, more than half of McClellan's army—lay paralyzed before them for the rest of the day." [1] Nearly 13,000 men, including no less than fifteen generals and brigadiers, had fallen within six hours. "They had, indeed," says Ropes, "with the utmost bravery, with inflexible resolution, and at a terrible sacrifice of life, repelled the third attack on the left flank of the Confederate army." [2] Meantime, Sumner's other division, under French, which was put in to reinforce Sedgwick, had by bearing southward been engaged in a bloody and desperate conflict, on Lee's left centre, with the divisions of D. H. Hill and R. H. Anderson, the latter of whom, on his way to reinforce the left wing, finding Hill's already decimated brigades hard pressed, had turned aside to their succor. They were now in a desperate struggle with these 10,000 fresh troops, under French and Richardson, who tried again and again to secure the strong central point marked by the Dunkard Church. The combat which followed "was," says Ropes, "beyond a question one of the most sanguinary and desperate in the whole war." [3] The Confederate artillery was hammered almost out of existence; the wood next the Dunkard Church was carried, and still Longstreet's infantry held their ground, recapturing the wood. For three hours, from ten till one, the conflict raged over the famous sunken road before the Federals secured possession of it, and

[1] "Life of Stonewall Jackson," pp. 254, 255.
[2] Ropes, II, p. 367.
[3] *Ibid.*, II, p. 368.

"Bloody Lane" is the name to-day by which is known this roadway whose possession that day cost over 6,000 men. "At this moment," says the same high authority whose account we have been following, "fortune favored McClellan. The two divisions of Franklin's corps, under W. F. Smith and Slocum, had arrived on this part of the field." They numbered from 10,000 to 12,000 men, fresh and in good condition.

Franklin wished to put them in, but Sumner, who had tested the temper of the men who held Lee's line, was unwilling to risk another attack, and "McClellan, undoubtedly much influenced by Sumner, would not permit any attack." "Even Sumner, bravest of men," says Henderson, "had been staggered by the fierce assault which had driven Sedgwick's troops like sheep across the corn-field, nor was McClellan disposed to push matters to extremity." [1]

The battle was now raging along the front of Lee's right, protected by the Antietam. About 1 P. M. the bridge was carried by Burnside's troops, and the stream was crossed both above and below, but not until four assaults had been repelled by Tombs's Brigade, of D. R. Jones's Division, assisted by the well-posted artillery. About three o'clock Cox made his assault on the heights where lay Lee's right, and achieved "a brilliant success," seizing the spur, breaking the infantry line, and capturing McIntosh's battery; and, says Ropes, "a complete victory seemed within sight. But this was not to be." Just at the crucial moment the Confederate "light division"—five brigades under A. P. Hill—pushing

[1] "Life of Stonewall Jackson," II, pp. 255, 256.

from Harper's Ferry for the sound of the guns, having marched seventeen miles and forded the Potomac, "climbed the heights south of the town," and "without an instant's hesitation they rushed to the rescue of their comrades," and the end was not long in coming. The lines were recaptured along with McIntosh's battery, and the Federal troops, with victory apparently almost in their grasp, were driven back with terrific slaughter. When night fell, 28,000 men lay on the field, the proof of the constancy of the American soldier. When night fell, Lee's army, decimated but intact, still held its position above the Antietam. "The failure to put Franklin in" was, in the opinion of Ropes, a capital error. He insists that McClellan should have won the battle; for unlike those who argue only from subsequent events, this thoughtful student of war admits that while "Lee's invasion had terminated in failure," he and his army had unquestionably won glory, even though he claims that the prestige of victory rested later with McClellan.[1] Thus ended what is said to have been the bloodiest day of the war, and one of the bloodiest battles ever fought. Each side lost about one-quarter of the troops engaged, and Lee had with less than half the force of his enemy, though compelled to fight in a place where he had not intended to fight, beaten his brave enemy off with such slaughter that though he offered him battle next day he was not again attacked, and the following morning he retired across the Potomac unmolested. Of "his intrepidity" in standing to fight an army,

[1] Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," II, p. 379.

which Ropes places at 70,000, with less than 40,000 men, not all of whom in fact were with him at the commencement of the action, Ropes has nothing but praise. "Nor could any troops," he adds, "have more fully justified the reliance their leader placed in them than the troops of the Army of Northern Virginia." [1] "Lee, in fact, intended to try his men again." Both Longstreet and Jackson urged recrossing the Potomac that night, but he refused.

"As the men," says Henderson, "sank down to rest on the line of battle, so exhausted that they could not be awakened to eat their rations; as the blood cooled and the tension on the nerves relaxed, and even the officers, faint with hunger and sickened with the awful slaughter, looked forward with apprehension to the morrow, from one indomitable heart the hope of victory had not yet vanished. In the deep silence of the night, more oppressive than the stunning roar of battle, Lee, still mounted, stood on the high-road to the Potomac, and as general after general rode in wearily from the front, he asked quietly of each, 'How is it on your part of the line?' Each told the same tale: their men were worn out; the enemy's numbers were overwhelming; there was nothing left but to retreat across the Potomac before daylight. Even Jackson had no other counsel to offer. His report was not the less impressive for his quiet and respectful tone. He had had to contend, he said, against the heaviest odds he had ever met. Many of his divisional and brigade commanders were dead or wounded, and his loss had been severe. Hood, who came next, was quite unmanned,

[1] Ibid., II, p. 377.

He exclaimed that he had no men left. 'Great God!' cried Lee, with an excitement he had not yet displayed, 'where is the splendid division you had this morning?' 'They are lying on the field, where you sent them,' was the reply, 'for few have straggled. My division has been almost wiped out.'

"After all had given their opinion, there was an appalling silence, which seemed to last for several minutes, and then General Lee, rising erect in his stirrups, said: 'Gentlemen, we will not cross the Potomac to-night. You will go to your respective commands, strengthen your lines; send two officers from each brigade toward the ford to collect your stragglers and get them up. Many have come in. I have had the proper steps taken to collect all the men who are in the rear. If McClellan wants to fight in the morning, I will give him battle again. Go!' Without a word of remonstrance the group broke up, leaving their great commander alone with his responsibility, and, says an eye-witness, 'if I read their faces aright, there was not one but considered that General Lee was taking a fearful risk.'" [1] All the next day he watched for this chance as the eagle watches from his crag for the prey; but it did not come and he recrossed into Virginia. He even looked forward to assuming the offensive. McClellan's left wing, protected by the Antietam and strongly posted beyond, was impregnable with any force he could bring to bear, but his right was not so well protected, and Lee now planned to attack and turn McClellan's right, and Jackson was to make the attempt to crush this

[1] Henderson, II, p. 262, 263, quoting General Stephen D. Lee, who was present at the conference.

wing, for which purpose he was to be given fifty guns, drawn from his own and other commands. As Stuart, however, had reported against the attempt the evening before, so now Jackson, having personally inspected the position in company with Colonel Stephen D. Lee, reported that it was impossible with any force he could bring to the attack.[1]

Of the battle of Sharpsburg, or Antietam, the view usually expressed is one largely influenced by events which succeeded it after a long interval. The view at the time, based on the actual battle and its immediate consequences, was widely different. The North was full of dejection rather than of elation, and General G. H. Gordon, who now commanded a division, wrote: "It would be useless to deny that at this period there was a despondent feeling in the army." General McClellan wrote that the States of the North are flooded with deserters and absentees.[2] Horace Greeley's paper, representing the great constituency which at that time opposed Lincoln's methods, voiced their opinion. "He leaves us," he declared, speaking of Lee, "the débris of his late camp, two disabled pieces of artillery, a few hundred of his stragglers, perhaps 2,000 of his wounded, and as many more of his unburied dead. Not a sound field-piece, caisson, ambulance, or wagon; not a tent, box of stores, or a pound of ammunition. He takes with him the supplies gathered in Maryland and the rich spoils of Harper's Ferry." [3]

[1] Ibid., II, p. 266, citing General S. D. Lee's account.
[2] Off. Rep., vol. XIX, part I, p. 70.
[3] *New York Tribune.* Quoted from Jones's "Lee," p. 195.

What those rich spoils were Lee himself mentions in the general order issued to his army, two weeks after it had, on the field of Sharpsburg, as he declares, with less than one-third of the enemy's numbers, resisted from daylight until dark the whole army of the enemy, and repulsed every attack along his entire front of more than four miles in extent.

In this order the commanding general recounts to his army its achievements, in reviewing which he declares he "cannot withhold the expression of his admiration of the indomitable courage it has displayed in battle, and its cheerful endurance of privation and hardship on the march." [1]

If an exultant note of pardonable pride in his army creeps into it, who can wonder! "Since your great victories around Richmond," he declares, "you have defeated the enemy at Cedar Mountain, expelled him from the Rappahannock, and, after a conflict of three days, utterly repulsed him on the plain of Manassas, and forced him to take shelter within the fortifications around his capital. Without halting for repose, you crossed the Potomac, stormed the heights of Harper's Ferry, made prisoners of more than 11,600 men and captured upward of 70 pieces of artillery, all of their small arms, and other munitions of war. While one corps of the army was thus engaged, another insured its success by arresting at Boonsboro the combined armies of the enemy, advancing under their favorite general to the relief of their beleaguered comrades.

"On the field of Sharpsburg, with less than one-

[1] General Orders, No. 116.

third of his numbers, you resisted from daylight till dark the whole army of the enemy, and repulsed every attack along his entire front of more than four miles in extent.

"The whole of the following day you stood prepared to resume the conflict on the same ground, and retired next morning without molestation across the Potomac.

"Two attempts subsequently made by the enemy to follow you across the river have resulted in his complete discomfiture and his being driven back with loss."

Such was the view that the commanding general, Lee himself, took of his campaign two weeks after the battle of Antietam, and it is no wonder that he should have added: "Achievements such as these demanded much valor and patriotism. History records few examples of greater fortitude and endurance than this army has exhibited;" or that he should, as he reports, have "been commissioned by the President to thank the army in the name of the Confederate States for the undying fame they had won for their arms."

In truth, whatever long subsequent events may have developed as to the consequences of the attack at Sharpsburg and Lee's retirement across the Potomac afterward, to the student of war, now as then, it must appear that the honors of that bloodiest battle of the war were with Lee, and remain with him to-day. That McClellan, with the complete disposition of Lee's forces in his hand, with an army of 87,000 men as brave as ever died for glory, and as gallantly officered, should not have destroyed Lee with but 35,000 in the total on

the field, and that Lee, with but that number up, while the rest, shoeless and lame, were limping far behind, yet trying to get up, should, with his back to the river, have not only survived that furious day, repulsing every attack along that deadly four-mile front, but should have stood his ground to offer battle again next day, and then have retired across the river unmolested, is proof beyond all doubt.[1]

"Why do you not move that line of battle to make it conform to your own?" asked Hunter McGuire of Grigsby, gazing at a long line of men lying quietly in ranks in a field at some little distance.

"Those men are all dead," was the reply; "they are Georgia soldiers." [2]

A Federal patrol that night, crossing a field where the fight had raged fiercest, came on a battle-line asleep, rank on rank, skirmishers in front and battle-line behind, all asleep on their arms. They were all dead.

It has been thought well to discuss somewhat at length this great battle fought by Lee on Northern soil, because it seems to illustrate peculiarly those qualities which, in combination, made him the great captain he was, and absolutely refutes the foolish charge that he was only a defensive general and remarkable only when behind breastworks. At Antietam there were no breastworks save the limestone ledges, the fences, and the sunken roads cut by the rains and worn by the wagons. It exhibits absolutely his grasp of the

[1] The Union losses were 12,400; Confederate, 8,000.

[2] Address on Stonewall Jackson, by Dr. Hunter McGuire, "The Confederate Cause," p. 204.

most difficult and unexpected situation, his unequalled audacity, his intrepidity, his resourcefulness, his incomparable resolution, and his skill in handling men alike in detached sections and in mass on the field of battle. Possibly, no other general on either side would have had the boldness to risk the stand Lee made in the angle of the Antietam, with the Potomac at his back; certainly no other general save Grant would have stood his ground after the battle, and have saved the morale of his army, and as to Grant, it is merely conjecture; for he fought no battle south of the Rapidan in which he did not largely outnumber his antagonist and vastly excel him in equipment.

It is true, as Ropes states, that McClellan followed Lee across the Potomac, but his two immediate attempts were promptly repelled. When McClellan found that Lee had recrossed the Potomac, he conceived a different idea of the situation from that he had had with Lee lying in his front with refilled cartridge boxes and ammunition chests. He decided to advance, and proceeded on the afternoon of the 19th to cross the river in pursuit. This movement he intrusted to Porter. Lee was now withdrawing to a region where he could rest and subsist his troops, and the ford at which the army had crossed was guarded by only a small rear guard of some 600 infantry, supported by the reserve artillery under General W. N. Pendleton. Crossing over under cover of a heavy artillery fire, Porter attacked the rear guard, which, owing to the necessity to guard threatened points above and below the ford, had been reduced to about 200

men, and captured four guns. McClellan then ordered Porter to move across in force, confident that he would catch Lee in retreat and disable him. Porter acted with decision. Lee appears to have gauged well the strength of the pursuit. When he received notice of the affair of the 19th from General Pendleton, he ordered Jackson to "drive back those people," and Jackson, who had already been apprised of the situation, acted promptly. With Hill leading, and Early in support, he turned on the force that was advancing under Sykes and Morell, and with an impetuous charge drove it back across the river, dyeing the stream with the blood of many a brave man, and entailing upon Porter's gallant corps a loss which satisfied the commander that though the Army of Virginia had retired from the banks of the Antietam, the idea that it was in retreat had not found a lodgement on the south bank of the Potomac. This was the end of McClellan's serious attempt to follow up the "victory" of Antietam. It was not until more than a month later, when Lee lay about Winchester, that McClellan made good a footing in Virginia. During this time, McClellan not having crossed the Potomac, Lee sent Stuart across the river on one of his famous around-the-enemy rides. Crossing the Potomac at daylight on the 10th of October, Stuart with 1,800 men rode due north to Mercersburg, thence on to Chambersburg, forty-six miles from his starting-point, in Virginia, which he reached at seven o'clock that evening. Here he destroyed the depot of supplies, including a large quantity of small arms and ammunition, and making a requi-

sition for some 500 horses, he set out around the rear of McClellan's army. Crossing the mountains, he passed through Summitsburg, crossed the Monocacy near Frederick, and reached Hyattstown at daylight on the 12th. Learning that 4,000 or 5,000 troops were guarding the roads, he took a by-road, and passing within a mile or two of the enemy near Pottersville, he seized the ford known as White's Ford, and, after a sharp skirmish, crossed back into Virginia, having ridden one hundred and twenty-six miles from daylight on the 10th to noon on the 12th, and passed close by McClellan's army lying in wait to catch him, and all without the loss of a single man killed.

This brilliant action of Stuart's had a far-reaching effect. It was the second time the daring cavalry leader had ridden around McClellan, and the people of the North were so excited by it that McClellan was forced to move southward. In the end, indeed, it brought about his removal.

"Though badly found in weapons, ammunition, military equipment, etc.," says Field-Marshal Viscount Wolseley, in speaking of Lee at this time, "his army had, nevertheless, achieved great things. His men were so badly shod (indeed, a considerable portion had no boots or shoes) that, at the battle of Antietam, General Lee assured me he never had more than 35,000 men with him; the remainder of his army, shoeless and footsore, were straggling along the roads in the rear, trying to reach him in time for the battle." Henderson declares that the discovery of Lee's despatch was the cause of the failure of his invasion of Maryland. But

for this he might have selected his own battle-field, there need have been no forced marches, and the 25,000 stragglers who had been left beyond the Potomac would have been in the fighting line.

Had Lee been in McClellan's place, who can doubt what the issue would have been? In fact, Mr. Lincoln plainly put this question to McClellan in another connection, and a little later relieved him of command and put the brave but hesitating Burnside in his place, only to add, a few weeks later on the fatal field of Fredericksburg, new laurels to Lee's chaplet.

## CHAPTER X

### FREDERICKSBURG

Toward the end of October, McClellan began to cross the Potomac with a view to moving through the Piedmont and thus forcing Lee from the Shenandoah Valley. He had learned a lesson in strategy from his able opponent. He brought into the Piedmont about 125,000 men and 320 guns, while Lee had in all about 72,000 men and 275 guns, of which 127 were smoothbore, short-range pieces. Lee still pursued his old plan of threatening the enemy's communications. He left Jackson with the Second Corps about Winchester, while Longstreet with the First Corps was to bar McClellan's way to the southward and fall on his communications should he turn to the Valley. He had no fear of McClellan's marching on Richmond before him, and he chose the plan which with his smaller force was the only one that promised assured success. He had at first decided to bring Jackson south of the Blue Ridge to unite with Longstreet by means of Fisher's Gap, and from the region about Gordonsville threaten McClellan's communications; but he immediately afterward changed his plan (at Jackson's suggestion, Henderson thinks) and left Jackson in "the Valley" to operate in the way he knew so well, while he himself remained in McClellan's front, awaiting his opportunity. His letter of November 9 to Jackson, setting

forth his plan, casts a light on his character, and on his relation to his great lieutenant. It runs as follows:[1]

HEAD-QUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
*November* 9, 1862—1 P. M.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL THOMAS J. JACKSON,
*Commanding Left Wing, etc.*

*General:* Your letter of the 7th is at hand. The enemy seems to be massing his troops along the Manassas Railroad in the vicinity of Piedmont, which gives him great facilities for bringing up supplies from Alexandria. It has occurred to me that his object may be to seize upon Strasburg with his main force, to intercept your ascent of the valley. This would oblige you to cross into the Lost River Valley, or west of it, unless you could force a passage through the Blue Ridge; hence my anxiety for your safety. If you can prevent such a movement of the enemy, and operate strongly upon his flank and rear through the gaps of the Blue Ridge, you would certainly, in my opinion, effect the object you propose. A demonstration of crossing into Maryland would serve the same purpose, and might call him back to the Potomac. As my object is to retard and baffle his designs, if it can be accomplished by manœuvring your corps as you propose, it will serve my purpose as well as if effected in any other way. With this understanding, you can use your discretion, which I know I can rely upon, in remaining or advancing up the valley. But I desire you will take precautions to prevent the enemy's occupying the roads west of the Massanutten Mountains, and your demonstration upon his flank might probably be as well made from a position nearer to Strasburg as from that you now occupy. If the enemy should move into the val-

[1] War Records, series I, vol. XIX, part II, p. 705.

ley through Thornton's Gap, you must seize the pass through the Massanutten Mountains as soon as you can, while Longstreet will advance through Milman's, which you term Fisher's Gap (on the direct road from Madison Court House to New Market). But I think his movement upon Front Royal the more probable of the two.

Keep me advised of your movements and intentions; and you must keep always in view the probability of an attack upon Richmond, from either north or south, when a concentration of forces will become necessary. The enemy has made no advance south of the Rappahannock line since I last wrote you. . . .

The non-occupation of Martinsburg by the enemy, and his not marching into the valley from his former base on the Potomac, shows, I think, that his whole force has been drawn from Maryland into Virginia east of the Blue Ridge. His retirement from Snicker's and Ashby's Gaps, and concentration of his force on the railroad in the vicinity of Manassas Gap, must either be for the purpose of supplying it or for making a descent upon Front Royal and Strasburg. I hope, therefore, you will be on your guard.

I am, etc.,

R. E. Lee, *General.*

Meantime, McClellan's methods were rapidly alienating anew the confidence of both the government and the people of the United States. McClellan felt that he had saved Washington and the nation; the government felt that he should have destroyed Lee's army. The government complained of McClellan's want of celerity; McClellan complained of Halleck's fault-finding. He wrote urging the government to say something in commendation of his army, which had been "badly cut

up and scattered by the overwhelming numbers brought against them in the battle of the 17th." The reply was a complaint of the army's "inactivity."

Finally, the breach became so wide as to place its closing beyond possibility. When Lee retired across the Potomac, Mr. Lincoln, as a war measure, gave notice of his intention to issue an emancipation proclamation. This, though it eventually had an immense influence on the result of the struggle, was at the time contrary to the views of many, both out of the armies of the Union and in them, and was sharply, if indirectly, criticised by McClellan.[1]

In the early days of November, McClellan advanced on Warrenton, and Lee, in anticipation of this, moved down to the east of the Blue Ridge and occupied Culpeper and the region south of the Rappahannock, whereupon, after a tart correspondence between McClellan and the authorities in Washington over McClellan's failure to destroy Lee's army, McClellan was relieved of his command, the order issuing on the 5th of November. At the same time—indeed, by the same order—the gallant Fitz John Porter was ordered before a court-martial to answer charges preferred against him by Pope, that he had lost him the battle of Second Manassas. Thus was lost the service of "probably the best officer in the Army of the Potomac," [2] and thus the North lost the services of the general whom General Lee is said to have considered

[1] Rhodes's "Hist. of U. S.," IV, p. 191. Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson," p, 289.

[2] *Ibid.*, II, p. 300

the best commander opposed to him during the war. That McClellan was not Lee's equal, either as a strategist, a tactician, or a fighter, was clearly manifest then as it is now; but he was a great organizer, conducted war on high principles, restored the morale of a shattered army, and defeated the object of Lee's first invasion of Maryland. And, as has been already quoted, it was well said that "without McClellan there could have been no Grant."

Two days before Lee's letter to Jackson was despatched, and on the very day that Lee decided to concentrate his forces, the plan of the campaign from the North was unexpectedly revolutionized. That day Burnside rode into McClellan's camp with an order superseding McClellan and appointing himself in command of the army. Politics had joined hands with impatience, and the most experienced general of the North was set aside for one who had so far commanded only a corps and doubted his own ability to do more.[1] What McClellan might have achieved had he been left untrammelled, as Grant was later, will never be known, any more than it will be known what Joseph E. Johnston might have accomplished had he not been superseded by the gallant but rash Hood before Sherman. But he could hardly have done worse than Burnside did. For the latter completely failed, and his failure led to a sacrifice of life as terrible as it was useless.

The new commander absolutely changed the plan which McClellan had laid down. Turning southward,

[1] Ropes, II, pp. 441, 442. Rhodes's "Hist. of U. S.," IV, pp. 190, 191. Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson," II, pp. 299, 300.

he led his army straight for Richmond. It sounded well, but was more difficult of accomplishment. Leaving Warrenton on the 15th of November, in two days Burnside's advance guard was on the heights opposite Fredericksburg. Had he pushed forward he might have seized the town and the heights behind it, and this Sumner urged his doing; but he feared to divide his army, and two days later Lee, who had previously advised, though he had not ordered, Jackson's withdrawal toward Richmond, ordered Longstreet to take position there, and called Jackson from the valley to Orange Court House on the way to join him. "One hardly knows," says Ropes, "which is more remarkable, General Lee's sagacity in estimating the inertia of his antagonist or his temerity in confronting him so long with a force only one-third as strong, and actually for a time refusing the aid which Jackson was bringing to him." [1]

Burnside, having made it thus manifest that he designed to cross the Rappahannock at Fredericksburg, Lee now moved down from Culpeper and Orange, on the upper waters of the Rappahannock, and posting himself on the heights on the southern side of the town, fortified and awaited Burnside's further advance. The fortifications for the artillery were made under the superintendence of General Lee's chief of artillery, General William N. Pendleton, and were much commended; at least they served. The question that had presented itself on Burnside's advance was whether Lee should take position at Fredericksburg or on the south shore of the North Anna. It appears that Lee and his lieutenants preferred the latter line of defence as present-

[1] Ropes, II, p. 454.

ing a better chance for a counterstroke; but the Confederate authorities insisted on the former. And Lee, always dutiful, proceeded to secure this line. To allow the enemy to approach so near Richmond unopposed, appeared to the government bad policy, and the valley of the Rappahannock and the other regions which would be given up were too valuable to be sacrificed without a struggle. Leaving Winchester on the 22d, Jackson marched down the valley, and crossing the Blue Ridge at Fisher's Gap, reached Orange Court House on the 27th, thirty-six miles from Fredericksburg, having marched meantime one hundred and twenty miles and rested his army two days. Burnside was still on the north side of the Rappahannock, getting his new line of communications and base of supplies established; the roads were growing worse and worse and the North more and more impatient.

Thus Lee in mid-December found himself posted on the heights of Fredericksburg to bar Burnside's way.

Fredericksburg lies on the plain on the west bank of the Rappahannock, where it is perhaps one hundred and fifty yards wide. The heights on this side begin on the river above the town and, curving around to the southward, continue in a range of hills parallel to the river at a distance of about a mile from the stream. The heights on the northern bank rose immediately above the water and were crowned by Burnside's powerful batteries. Burnside's forces, as given by himself, numbered 113,000, while Lee's total strength was 78,288 men of all arms.[1] Longstreet was posted on the heights back of the old town in a formidable

[1] Taylor's "General Lee," pp. 145, 146.

position, and Jackson was (on the 29th of November) despatched by Lee to guard the crossing-places further down the river. Early, in command of Ewell's Division, was sent to Skinker's Neck, a point ten or twelve miles below the town. D. H. Hill was placed at Port Royal, five miles yet farther down. A. P. Hill and Taliaferro were posted at or near Guinea Station, on the railway to Richmond—the former within a few miles of Longstreet's right and the latter some five miles farther off, all about an equal distance from Longstreet and D. H. Hill. With his troops thus disposed in a way to lead Burnside to attack and at the same time to enable him to concentrate at the moment of attack and defeat him, Lee awaited his enemy's next move, while his cavalry division guarded his flank and patrolled the stream. He had not long to watch, and this time was put to good use in fortifying. An attempt to pass the Federal gunboats up the river was defeated at Port Royal by D. H. Hill and Stuart's horse artillery, and Early caused to end what was apparently an attempt to cross at Skinker's Neck. But on the 11th Burnside moved directly on Fredericksburg.

The actual laying of the pontoons, after a number of attempts in which the troops attempting it were picked off, man by man, by Barksdale's Mississippi regiments posted in the cellars of houses overlooking the water, was gallantly effected by the Federal troops on the afternoon of the 11th, under cover of a heavy artillery fire from 150 guns, and that evening and the following day Burnside's army crossed over on five bridges, their movements being veiled by a heavy fog which

rose from the river and the sodden ground, blanketing all beneath it. The following morning as the fog lifted, Burnside's army, with Franklin commanding his left and Sumner his right, filled the plains as they advanced to the attack where Lee lay along the heights above the town, with Longstreet commanding his left and Jackson his right. It was a battle as fierce almost as Sharpsburg, and scarcely less deadly for the hapless assailants. Also, like Sharpsburg, it was fatuously fought in detachments. The assault began on the less commanding hills to the south of the town where Jackson lay, his right protected by the artillery and Stuart's Cavalry, faced north on the plain near Hamilton's Crossing. Here young John Pelham reaped fame by holding back the enemy for a time with a single piece, posted on the plain. Burnside had imagined that Jackson was still at Port Royal, fifteen miles below, guarding the crossing,[1] and thus had ordered Franklin to seize the heights. Franklin promptly directed Reynolds to prepare to attack. He in compliance with his instructions "assigned the duty to Meade's division, supported by Gibbon's." In three battle-lines came on, as if on parade, Meade's and Gibbon's earnest Pennsylvanians. Line after line advanced to the attack, only to be swept back with terrific slaughter. When the infantry were swept back, the artillery was sent in to clear the way, and after a fierce duel the Pennsylvanians advanced again. At one point where a marshy stream bordered by woodland, known as Deep Run, came through, it had been supposed that the marsh was impassable, and thus a gap of about 600

[1] Ropes, II, p. 468.

yards had been left in Jackson's lines, though Early lay across it only a third of a mile to the rear. Here, shielded by the woods from the leaden sleet as they advanced, the gallant assailants broke through the first line of A. P. Hill. Passing between the brigades of Lane and Archer, the first brigade turned to the right and rolled up Lane's right flank, while the next one, sweeping to the left, struck Archer's flank, who, though taken by surprise, held on stoutly. Had they been supported the situation might have been serious, but Thomas came to Lane's aid, and Jackson ordered up Early and Taliaferro from his third line, while Gregg brought up his brigade in time to help stay the disaster, though it cost him his life to do so.

The leading regiment in the advance of Gibbon's troops was the 107th Pennsylvania, led by its gallant commander, Colonel (later General) T. F. McCoy, a veteran of the Mexican War. In the advance it was separated for a time from the rest of the line, and the leading place was taken by other troops, which were staggered and stopped by the terrific fire directed against them. Finding his advance checked, General Gibbon rode up to the 107th Pennsylvania, and pointing to the front, said: "I desire this regiment to take that wood at the point of the bayonet." Colonel McCoy gave the orders to unsling knapsacks and fix bayonets, and, after a few simple words to his men, moved forward. Passing over the broken troops in their front, they rushed onward and penetrated the wood, breaking through the line before them and clearing the line of the railroad.

This was but one of many gallant actions that day,

so fatal to the Union arms; but it marked the furthest advance of Burnside's troops on Lee's right.

Franklin's brave divisions having failed to break Lee's right, an assault was made against Lee's left by Sumner, who had been ordered to hold his men where they were sheltered by the town, until "an impression" could be made on Lee's right. It was an even more impossible and deadly task than Franklin had essayed. A canal too deep to cross save by bridges stretched across the flat below the hill. A stout stone wall ran along the base of the hill known as Marye's Heights, and up the slope rifle pits had been dug to shelter all the men needed for the defence, while on top were posted the artillery and supporting infantry, all sweeping the level plain below with an iron hail. "Six distinct and separate assaults were made against Longstreet's front," line after line rushing recklessly forward under the deadly fire "only to be torn to pieces" and melt away without making any impression on Lee's determined veterans. Franklin was now called on to renew his attack and co-operate on the left. He was unable to respond. His power was spent. His force had been exhausted. When night came the great army of Burnside had been hurled back with losses amounting to 12,500 men, "sacrificed to incompetency," after having displayed, in a task which "exceeded human endeavor," a heroism which "won the praise and the pity of their opponents." [1]

[1] Taylor's "General Lee," p. 148. Allan, pp. 475–509. Ropes, II, pp. 462–7. Alexander, pp. 310-16. The losses in the Federal army numbered 12,653; in the Confederate army, 5,322, killed and wounded.

The following day passed without the renewal of the attack which Lee expected, and which Burnside proposed, only to have his lieutenants, who knew the futility of it, protest against such useless sacrifice of life; and next morning Burnside, shaken and distressed over his disaster, sent a flag of truce to Jackson's front, asking for a cessation of hostilities to bury the dead.[1] As he finished burying his dead he, under cover of a winter storm, retired to the other side in the gloom of defeat and broke his pontoon bridges. It was without doubt one of the most ineffective battles ever fought by the North. A little later Burnside charged a number of his best generals with having failed him and thus caused his defeat. He issued an order dismissing from the service Generals Hooker, Brooks, Newton, and Cochrane, and relieving from duty with the Army of the Potomac, Generals Franklin W. F. Smith, Sturgis, Ferrero, and other officers.[2] The final answer to this wholesale dismissal came after his "mud-campaign" affair of five or six weeks later, when he attempted to do what Hooker later attempted to

[1] The writer as a small boy rode over the battle-field of Fredericksburg with his father, who was a major on the staff of General William N. Pendleton, General Lee's chief of artillery, and he recalls vividly the terrible sight of a battle-field while the dead are being buried: blood everywhere—along the trenches, the shattered fences, and the roadsides—the orchards, peeled by the bullets and canister, looked at a little distance as if covered with snow; the plank fences, splintered by shot and shrapnel, looked as though they had been whitewashed, and the field, torn by shells and covered with dead horses, broken arms, and débris, presented an ineffaceable scene of desolation, while on the common, being filled with the bloody and rigid forms of those who two days before had been the bravest of the brave, was a long, wide, ghastly trench, where the path of glory ended.

[2] Off. Rep., 31, p. 998. Ropes, II, p. 470.

do, with disastrous results, at Chancellorsville. He "stuck in the mud," and, on "the representations made by his lieutenants to the President, was superseded" by "Fighting" Joe Hooker.

Fredericksburg was, with the exception of Cold Harbor, almost the only wholly defensive battle that Lee fought, and in this he could scarcely believe that Burnside had put forth all his strength. His report and letters show that he expected and awaited another and fiercer assault. It is asserted that Jackson counselled a night attack on Burnside's army as it lay in the town after the battle, and he undoubtedly contemplated the possibility of such an attack, for he ordered his chief of medical staff to be ready with his bandages to furnish bands for the arms of the men, by which they would know each other should such an attack be made.[1] Lee, however, decided against this plan, if it was ever formally proposed, and in his report he gives his reason. "The attack on the 13th," he says, "had been so easily repulsed, and by so small a part of our army, that it was not supposed the enemy would limit his effort, which, in view of the magnitude of his preparations and the extent of his force, seemed to be comparatively insignificant. Believing, therefore, that he would attack us, it was not deemed expedient to lose the advantage of our position and expose the troops to the fire of his inaccessible batteries beyond the river by advancing against him." It appears to be the general opinion of military critics that the mis-

[1] Address on Stonewall Jackson by Dr. Hunter McGuire, "The Confederate Cause." (The Bell Co., Richmond, Va.)

take of Fredericksburg by the Southern leaders was the substitution of the line of the Rappahannock for that of the North Anna, which Lee and Jackson both favored. Even after his terrific defeat Burnside could not be pursued; his flanks were so well protected by the river and by the tremendous fortifications along the Stafford Heights, on the north bank of the stream. Had he attempted to cross the North Anna and met with a similar defeat, he would probably never have been able to get his army back across the bottomless levels of the Mattapony. However, the South was well satisfied with the result. When Lee visited Richmond, a little later, the authorities informed him that the war was substantially over—the fight was won. Lee knew better. And the others were to have a rude awakening. Lee knew that his resources were being steadily exhausted, and that those of the enemy were inexhaustible.

Lee was at this time at the zenith of his fame as a successful general, yet was never more modest. His letter of Christmas Day, 1862, to his wife is full of the spirit of the man in his most intimate moments. He writes: "I will commence this holy day by writing to you. My heart is filled with gratitude to God for the unspeakable mercies with which He has blessed us in this day; for those He has granted us from the beginning of life, and particularly for those He has vouchsafed us during the past year. What should become of us without His crowning help and protection? Oh! if our people would only recognize it and cease from vain self-boasting and adulation, how strong would be

my belief in final success and happiness to our country. But what a cruel thing is war to separate and destroy families and friends, and mar the purest joys and happiness God has granted us in this world, to fill our hearts with hatred instead of love for our neighbors, and to devastate the fair face of this beautiful world! I pray that on this day, when only peace and good-will are preached to mankind, better thoughts may fill the hearts of our enemies and turn them to peace. Our army was never in such good health and condition since I have been attached to it. I believe they share with me my disappointment that the enemy did not renew the combat on the 13th. I was holding back all that day and husbanding our strength and ammunition for the great struggle for which I thought I was preparing. Had I divined that was to have been his only effort, he would have had more of it. My heart bleeds at the death of every one of our gallant men."

Should the portrait of a victorious general be drawn, I know no better example than this simple outline of a Christian soldier drawn out of his heart that Christmas morning in his tent, while the world rang with his victory of two weeks before. It is a portrait of which the South may well be proud.

## CHAPTER XI

### CHANCELLORSVILLE

But again we have, following on his success in the defence of Fredericksburg, the proof of Lee's boldness in offensive operations, which resulted in what is esteemed among foreign military critics as the most brilliant action, not only of the Civil War, but of the century.

With a vast expenditure of care and treasure, the armies of the Union were once more recruited and equipped, and the command of the Army of the Potomac was, as we have seen, intrusted to General Hooker—"Fighting Joe Hooker," as he was called—whose reputation was such that he was supposed to make good at once all the deficiencies of McClellan and Burnside. He had shown capacity to command a corps both in the West and the East, and was given to criticising his superiors with much self-confidence. His self-confidence was, indeed, so great that it called from Mr. Lincoln one of those remarkable letters which he was given to writing on occasion. He says: "I have heard, in such a way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the army and the government needed a dictator. Of course, it is not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you the command. Only those generals who gain successes can set up dictators. What I ask of you is military suc-

cess, and I will risk the dictatorship. . . ." The situation of the Confederacy was at this time, however the glamour of Lee's victory may have blinded the authorities, steadily growing more precarious. The far South-west was substantially cut off. In Kentucky and Tennessee the Union arms had prospered; and along the seaboard of the Carolinas, from New-Berne south the Confederate forces had much to do to hold their own. The North had now some 900,000 men in the field and the South less than two-thirds of that number.

In the spring the interior of Virginia and Richmond itself were threatened from Fortress Monroe and Suffolk, on the south side of the James, and a requisition was made on Lee by the government in Richmond to send Longstreet with sufficient troops to make Richmond secure. Accordingly, although Ransom had already gone with 3,600 men, Longstreet was now sent, with the gallant divisions of Pickett and Hood, to take care of "the south side," thus cutting down Lee's army by some 20,000 veteran troops. Lee, who was not deceived by the enemy's movements, instructed Longstreet to so "dispose his troops that they could return to the Rappahannock at the first alarm." But this proved impossible. Just when the Union authorities had learned, says Henderson, not to interfere with their general's plans, the Confederate authorities took it up. Contrary to Lee's expressed request, Longstreet, who wished to go, was sent to Suffolk, a hundred and twenty odd miles from Lee, and when Hooker moved, Longstreet was not able to rejoin Lee in time to aid him.

The plan on which Hooker now proceeded is acknowl-

edged to have been well conceived, and it gave promise of victory. Lee had fortified the right bank of the river for something like forty miles from Banks's Ford, above Fredericksburg, to Port Royal, below, and these fortifications were filled with the victors of Fredericksburg. It would not do to attack him in front; but Hooker, who had taken a firm grasp of the situation, felt that he could attack him in the flank and with his great army crush him. In the full assurance that he had "the finest army in the world" and would soon be " holding the strongest position on the planet," he elaborated his plans with care and prepared to deliver the assault which should force Lee from his defensive position, with the alternative of the capture of his entire army. Possibly, he ranked Lee as a captain good for defensive operations alone. If so, his error cost him dear. While he was congratulating himself on his tactics, and issuing grandiloquent proclamations to his eager yet untried army in the tone of a conqueror, declaring that the enemy must come out from his breastworks and fight him on his own ground, "where certain destruction awaited him," or else "ingloriously fly," Lee performed the same masterly feat which he had already performed before Richmond and in the Piedmont, and with yet more signal success. Detaching Stonewall Jackson from his force in front of Sedgwick, he sent him around Hooker's right at Chancellorsville, and while the latter was congratulating himself that Lee was in full retreat on Gordonsville, he fell upon him and rolled him up like a scroll. Unhappily, his great lieutenant who performed this feat fell in

the moment of victory, shot by his own men in the dusk of the evening as he galloped past from a reconnoissance. Possibly, Hooker's army was saved by this fatal accident from capture or annihilation that night. For when, a week later, Stonewall Jackson, still murmuring of his battle-lines, passed over the river to rest under the shade of the trees, it was with a fame hardly second to that of his great captain. Such in brief was the campaign which ended at Chancellorsville. In more detail—and it deserves more detail—it was as follows:

In fact, Lee had intended to assume the offensive himself as soon as it was possible to move, and had been prevented from doing so before only by the condition of his horses, the want of feed for them, and of supplies for his men. The conquering enemy before which his victorious army finally melted away was already encompassing his lines, impregnable to any other foe, and no strategy nor tactics, however masterly, no constancy, however unconquerable, could hold it back. He might fill his wasted ranks even though it took "the seed-corn of the Confederacy" to do it, but he could not subsist his army nor equip them to march. Whatever delusions the government in Richmond had as to the coming of peace, he had none. He had already written that he might "have to yield to a stronger force than General Burnside," and all winter as he lay in his trenches after Burnside's defeat, contained by that "stronger force" than the great army opposite him, he was "haunted by the idea of securing the provisions, wagons, and guns of the enemy." [1] Ten days before

[1] Letter of Lee to General Trimble, March 8, 1863, War Records, XXV, part II, p. 658.

Hooker moved, Lee had written an urgent letter to President Davis stating that he considered it "all important that we should assume the aggressive by the 1st of May," adding that if he could be placed in a condition to make a vigorous advance at that time, he thought the valley could be swept of the enemy and the army opposite be thrown north of the Potomac. He appears, indeed, to have taken "our old friend, J. H.," as he speaks of him, rather humorously; for he wrote on the 26th of February: "General Hooker is obliged to do something. I do not know what it will be. He is playing the Chinese game, trying what frightening will do. He runs out his guns, starts his wagons and troops up and down the river, and creates an excitement generally. Our men look on in content, give a cheer, and all again subsides *in statu quo ante bellum*." [1]

Such was the temper of general and men when Hooker finally fulfilled Lee's prophecy and did "something."

On the 27th of April, Hooker, who had worked hard to get his army in shape, began his movement to destroy Lee, as to the success of which neither he nor his army had the least doubt. Nor, except for the genius of his opponents and the constancy of the men they commanded, was there much room for doubt. He had 130,000 men and 448 guns; Lee had 62,000 men and 170 guns.[2] Hooker would divide his army, with one part threaten him, with the other manœuvre him out of his position, and uniting his own forces on the field of battle, crush him by sheer weight. His line of communication with the Potomac was securely protected by the

[1] Letter to his daughter Agnes, February 26, 1863.
[2] Bigelow's "Chancellorsville Campaign." pp. 21, 262.

Rappahannock; so he moved at ease. While Sedgwick, with two corps, the First and Sixth, was ordered to cross the Rappahannock below Lee's fortified position at Fredericksburg, threaten his right flank, and assail his lines of communication with Richmond, following him up if he retreated, Hooker, with the Fifth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Corps and Pleasanton's brigades of horse, marched up the river, crossed it high up beyond Lee's extreme left, and prepared to assail his rear. His army was in as fine spirits as himself, and it responded cheerfully to his eager urging.

With a view to drawing off Lee's cavalry and cutting his line of communication, Hooker had sent his own cavalry under Stoneman to operate toward Orange Court House and Gordonsville and the Virginia Central Railroad. But Stuart knew the situation too well to be drawn off at such a critical juncture, and having sent a regiment or two under W. H. F. Lee to follow Stoneman in his raid, he applied himself to his proper duty of hanging on the flank of Hooker's advancing columns and furnishing Lee with information as to his movements and strength. As Hooker advanced, the alert cavalry general detached a regiment to retard him, and making a detour with one of his brigades, flung himself across the routes leading to Lee's communications. On the morning of the 28th of April, Lee received from him the news that Hooker was moving in force toward Kelly's Ford, well to his left, and next evening he received the further information that a corps had crossed that afternoon at Ely's Ford and Germana Ford. He thereupon brought Jackson up from below to Hamilton's

Crossing, and he promptly sent Anderson with his division to Chancellorsville, a point of junction of the roads leading from Orange Court House and the fords of the Rapidan and Rappahannock, with orders to fortify the best positions commanding the roads. Meantime, equally interesting information came from the southward. Jackson sent him word on the morning of the 29th that, under cover of the fog, Sedgwick had laid down his bridges and was crossing in force at Deep Run, where he was protected by his powerful batteries on the Stafford Heights. Lee was in good humor; "something" was being done, and he would now be able to do something himself. His remark to the staff officer bringing him Jackson's report was a jocular one: "Well, I heard firing, and I thought it was time some of you lazy young fellows were coming to tell me what it was about. Tell your good general that he knows what to do with the enemy just as well as I do." Next morning came the further information from Stuart that the troops that had crossed the Rapidan in Lee's rear were the Fifth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Corps, and that their commanders, Meade, Howard, and Slocum, were with them. Also, that Anderson was falling back. Thus, it was known to Lee that the main body of Hooker's army was over the river, marching on him to crush him. Jackson wished to attack Sedgwick, who had entrenched himself on the river under cover of the tremendous batteries on the Stafford side. But Lee deemed this as impracticable as it was at the first battle of Fredericksburg. "It was," he said, "hard to get at the enemy, and harder

still to get away if we drove him into the river." Nevertheless, such was his confidence in his lieutenant, that he told him that "if he thought it could be done," he would "give orders for it." Jackson, however, on examining the ground, came to the same conclusion with Lee, and Lee, leaving Early with 10,000 men, including his reserve artillery under General Pendleton—some 50 guns—to hold Sedgwick in check, with the rest of his army turned on Hooker, a dozen miles away, marching on his rear through the forests of Spottsylvania. Jackson was sent to relieve Anderson, who had taken and entrenched a position along a stretch of rising ground facing the roads by which Hooker was advancing through the wilderness.

Fortunately for Lee, Hooker's self-assurance appears to have left him suddenly when he came face to face with the situation he had developed. He had laid out a good plan, and had carried it through to a considerable extent with marked success, and to his own entire satisfaction. Sedgwick (with three army corps) had easily crossed the river below Lee's right and was ready, as directed, to co-operate with Hooker. The latter's own large army had marched swiftly and was in the highest spirits, and he was now well in Lee's rear, in a position which he declared "the strongest on the planet." [1] According to current report he had even asserted that "God Almighty couldn't prevent his destroying the rebel army," a speech which is said to have "created great uneasiness even to the most irreligious." [2] Yet, as he passed

[1] C. Schurz's "Autobiography."
[2] Bigelow's "Chancellorsville," p. 237.

mile after mile into the tangles of the Spottsylvania wilderness, he suddenly hesitated and paused in his advance. Whether the Federal commander was momentarily overcome by the magnitude of Lee's fame, or whether by the terrifying mystery of the shadowy silences stretching before him, from which no word had come since he crossed the Rappahannock and turned southward, or whether there was a personal reason, all of which have been asserted, he halted and began to boast of his achievement. He issued an order to his army as if he were already a victor. He declared that "the operations of the Fifth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Corps have been a succession of splendid achievements." Yet they had done nothing but march, and, according to some of his own officers, felt that this was sheer gasconade. He announced further that "the operations of the last three days have determined that the enemy must either ingloriously fly or come out from behind his defences and give us battle on our own ground, where certain destruction awaits him." This was nearer the truth, and was quite true except the last conclusion, which the event was to prove quite false. It was this pause and this misplaced confidence in the Federal commander which gave Lee his opportunity.

When Hooker crossed the Rapidan, the region into which he plunged after leaving the open country is one which, since the earliest advent of the white man on the continent, has amply justified the name by which it is known—"the Wilderness." A densely wooded, rolling plateau stretches nearly twenty miles in extent each way. Too poor to be cultivated success-

fully, it has remained substantially as it was when the white man first came, an almost impenetrable jungle of scrubby growth, which used to be known as "the Poisoned Lands." A few small streams, locally termed "runs," steal through it, and in a few places the land was found good enough to pay for clearing and cultivating; but for the most part it remained forest and thicket, given up to the denizens of the forest, the deer, the 'possum, the wild turkey, and the raccoon. Governor Spottswood established an iron furnace within or near its borders as far back as the middle of the eighteenth century, and at the time of the war some of his descendants still attempted to work the not very remunerative ore which existed in certain places, to which fact was due in part the success of Lee's contemplated plan. Three or four roads only ran through this Wilderness in the direction of Fredericksburg. Two of these, running generally eastward—the first, known as the Turnpike, leading from Kelly's Ford, on the Rappahannock, and Germana Ford, on the Rapidan, and the second, the Orange Plank Road—united at a point where stood a church known as "Wilderness Church," and a tavern called Dowdall's Tavern, about four miles west of the Cross Roads, known as Chancellorsville, a plantation on a high plateau, eight or ten miles from Fredericksburg. At Chancellorsville the roads met and crossed a third road, leading from Kelly's Ford, on the Rappahannock, by way of Ely's and Germana Fords, on the Rapidan, and dividing again, ran separately for several miles toward Fredericksburg, then, uniting once more, they formed one road to Fredericksburg.

Toward the western part of the Wilderness, a few miles west of Chancellorsville, ran north and south, at nearly right angles to these highways, a country road known as the Brock Road, leading to Spottsylvania, and where the Brock Road made a curve, across the arc, a mile or so further west lay a narrow country road screened, like the others, by woods. On the eastern side of the Wilderness, to the north-eastward of Chancellorsville, following generally the course of the Rappahannock to Fredericksburg, was the River Road, which was united with the others at Chancellorsville by a road which crossed the Rappahannock at the United States Ford. One other way cut through the Wilderness almost due east and west, several miles south of the Turnpike and Plank Roads—an unfinished railway, laid off from Fredericksburg toward Orange Court House. Thus it will be seen that Chancellorsville, on open and rising ground, where three of the four principal roads through this wooded Wilderness met, was a point of the greatest importance. And this all the leaders knew. This point Hooker had now secured.

When Jackson, about eight o'clock on the morning of the 1st, reached the line where Anderson had entrenched across the roads, several miles east of Chancellorsville, he, by Lee's orders, at once abandoning the breastworks, advanced on Hooker, who, established in his strong position at Chancellorsville, was now beginning to advance once more. It is possible that this battle was won the moment Jackson passed beyond Anderson's entrenchments. From this time Hooker lost all initiative and fought almost wholly on the de-

fensive. Jackson soon came on the Federal cavalry, moving in advance of the columns which Hooker was now moving forward. Anderson was put in advance, with McLaws following, together with Jackson's own troops, and moving forward by both the Turnpike and Plank Roads, the cavalry was soon driven in. Then, as he advanced farther, McLaws, on the Turnpike, found his way barred by infantry and artillery posted beyond an open field, and it was necessary to deploy his brigades to turn their flank before proceeding onward. Jackson, on the left, advancing along the Plank Road, likewise found his way barred by an advancing column, and was obliged to flank with a brigade along the unfinished railway to the enemy's right before he could advance farther. This done, however, the Confederates followed the retiring Federals, until toward sunset Lee, who was personally present, found himself immediately in front of Hooker's army of some 70,000 men, posted on the plateau of Chancellorsville in the position which Hooker had boasted was his "own ground," and "the strongest position on the planet." Hooker's left rested on the Rappahannock River, covering the United States Ford, to which a road led from Chancellorsville; his centre occupied the rise that covered the Cross Roads at Chancellorsville, and, extending westward, took in the eminences of Fairview and Hazel Grove, while his right, refused, stretched westward through the forest and ended no one knew where. Of the strength of this position Lee himself has spoken.

This was the position which Lee proposed to attack before Sedgwick could come up, wherever the

weakest point should be found. He immediately had the enemy's front carefully reconnoitred and himself reconnoitred personally the position of the left wing, resting on the Rappahannock, behind a stream known as Mineral Spring Run. It was found too strong to attack in front—at least at night—and Lee halted and formed line of battle across the Plank Road, a couple of miles from Chancellorsville, his left extending toward Catherine Furnace, above which Hooker's right centre lay in force. Into the bivouac where Lee and Jackson consulted, in a pine thicket near the Plank Road, came Stuart that evening with important information which solved the difficulty. General Fitz Lee, reconnoitring around the enemy's right wing miles to the north-westward, had discovered that this wing, where were posted the German divisions of Howard, rested in the air, having no protection but the woods and a couple of regiments refused with an ordinary breastwork. It presented a better chance of turning than Porter had presented at Gaines's Mill. The attempt, however, was full of danger, first in that it divided Lee's army, already numerically far below that which it confronted; and secondly, in that it was necessary to pass the flanking column entirely across the front of Hooker's centre and right, posted in line of battle, and he might, if active enough, strike it on the march and smash it to pieces. Lee and his lieutenants, however, were prepared to take all necessary chances where the reward was so promising, and after a conference the audacious plan was decided on. The forest would partly conceal the movements, and Stuart would use

his cavalry as a screen and cover to the moving troops. McLaws was ordered to protect his position in Hooker's front by as strong entrenchments as possible, and Jackson was given charge of the flanking force, numbering about 25,000 men. He sent his engineers to ascertain if any other road than the Plank Road led through the forest toward the south-west, and on learning from a gentleman who lived near by that a new way or road had recently been cut to haul cord-wood to a furnace, he informed General Lee that his troops would move at once. The order was soon given, and as the day broke, the Second Corps, with Fitz Lee's Cavalry (the 2d Virginia, commanded by Colonel Munford, in the lead) covering the front, took the road to the south-west, leaving Lee with only Anderson's and McLaws's Divisions, some 10,000 men, to hold in check Hooker's powerful army. Audacity has rarely gone further, and never was it better rewarded. Throwing forward skirmishers, and opening with his artillery from every eminence, Lee made a demonstration which kept Hooker well occupied. The movement of Jackson's column was seen, the dust rising high above the trees, and was reported to Hooker early in the morning, but he jumped to the conclusion that the enemy, finding him too strong on ground chosen by himself, had taken the other alternative that he had set for him and was ingloriously flying. Lee, he believed, forced by Sedgwick from the direct line of retreat on Richmond, was retreating on Gordonsville. Though at times he wavered as he consulted his maps and ejaculated that it was not like Lee, nearly all day long he labored

under this delusion. As at a certain point Jackson, with baggage trains, etc., turned almost due south down a valley, it was not, perhaps, unnatural that this should have appeared to the Federal commander a flight. The moving column was shelled vigorously from the high plateau on Hooker's right, known as Hazel Grove, and Sickles was sent with his corps to cut up the moving force, but he met with such a reception from Anderson, on Lee's left, and made such slow progress, that he called for reinforcements, and Howard, holding Hooker's extreme right, was directed to send him a brigade, and despatched Barlow, with the brigade which formed his reserve, to Sickles's aid, thus weakening the very point against which Lee had sent Jackson to address his attack. As Sickles with Pleasanton's cavalry began to make progress, Jackson sent back the brigades of Archer and Thomas, and Brown's battalion of artillery, to aid Anderson; but, unswerved from his design, with the rest of his force he pushed on southwestward, till he reached the road he was seeking—a road west of the Brock Road, running north and south well beyond the extreme end of Hooker's right. Here turning northward, Jackson struck for the point where this road crosses the Plank Road, some two miles west of Hooker's extreme right, which it was planned to destroy. Reaching the Cross Roads about two o'clock, he received from General Fitzhugh Lee, who had halted here, the information that the enemy were apparently wholly ignorant of his approach, and by proceeding a mile or so farther on to the Turnpike, he might strike Hooker's right in the rear. It has been related that,

riding forward with General Fitz Lee, attended by a single courier, he sought the hill-top from which Lee had discovered the facts he disclosed, and found the situation still unchanged. Lee speaks of "the commander of the cavalry accompanying him," but does not say it was himself, and it seems certain that Munford with the Second Virginia Cavalry was in the lead all the time. A few hundred yards below them to the eastward was the end of Hooker's line and fortifications, heavily protected in front with abatis, but resting on nothing that could afford protection, and "untenanted by a single company." The men were scattered about in groups, loafing, gossiping, playing cards, drawing rations, and cooking, while their arms were stacked as though they were in a summer encampment. Lee says that Jackson's eyes "burnt with a brilliant glow" while he scanned the extraordinary scene, but he uttered no words though his lips moved. Then suddenly turning to his courier he gave his orders: "Tell General Rodes to move across the Plank Road and halt when he gets to the old turnpike; I will join him there." He turned back and scanned the scene again and then rode rapidly down the hill.[1]

By four o'clock, or a little after, the divisions which had turned back to balk Sickles's advance on the turning point were coming up, and Rodes was deploying his men in line of battle across the turnpike, enveloping Howard's still unsuspecting right, still engaged in getting supper and amusing themselves. Hooker, himself, was equally unsuspecting. On being informed

[1] F. Lee's "Lee."

in the morning that Lee was crossing his front, he had notified Howard to look to his right and secure it, and Howard replied that he had done so; but after Sickles drove his way through toward where Jackson turned south, he returned to his complacent belief that Lee was fleeing or preparing to do so. And at four o'clock, just at the time that Jackson was preparing to strike home, he sent an order to Sedgwick to capture Fredericksburg and everything in it as soon as preparations permitted, and "vigorously pursue the enemy. We know," he added, "that the enemy is fleeing, trying to save his trains. Two of Sickles's divisions are among them." It was a fatal error into which he had fallen, and to his undoing. Howard also held this view.

It was near six o'clock when, everything being in readiness, his men in two lines of battle, with columns in support, and all orders given for the advance to roll up the enemy's right and sweep forward, Jackson gave Rodes the word to go forward. At the sound of a bugle, re-echoed from right to left where the divisions were posted in battle line awaiting the signal, the lines swept forward, skirmishers in advance, and driving the startled denizens of the forest scurrying before them, broke through the woods on the equally startled line of Howard's Germans. Twenty regiments of Howard's corps lay in the trenches, along which Jackson's cheering battle lines were sweeping; but beyond them was a gap of over a mile, left by the withdrawal of Sickles and of Barlow's reserve brigade. Thus, though they attempted to make a stand, and, Schurz declares, withstood the shock for nearly a half hour, they were

soon swept away in utter rout and panic. Beyond them another brigade, facing to the right, attempted to stay the fierce surge of Jackson's lines; but every mounted officer was struck from his horse by the rain of bullet and canister, and, after a gallant but hapless effort, they too were swept into the rout. In the open lay other German regiments trying to stem the tide, while on the opposite ridge across the wide clearing, from breastwork and rifle-pit blazed the fierce fire of Howard's last brigade, checking for a few moments the steady onsweep with rifle fire and canister; but Rodes, dashing forward, cleared the field, and then rushing up the ridge drove on with resistless force into the red flame pouring from the long line of breastworks, and climbing the parapets, swept away the last remnant of Howard's corps, Hooker's right wing. The rout of this corps was now complete and hopeless, and it demanded good generalship and great courage in line and staff not to have it extended to the next command in the same degree. While this catastrophe was befalling his right wing, Hooker is said to have been seated on the portico of the Chancellor mansion, congratulating himself on the success of his well-matured plan. About him were staff officers who, like him, believed that Lee's second corps was in full retreat and could well be left to Sickles and Pleasanton and Barlow till such time as he should have rolled back the rest of Lee's army and taken up the pursuit. Orders had already been given to his left to advance and overwhelm what remained in their front. It was all like a dream that has been realized. From this dream the Federal com-

mander was rudely awakened. From his right down the aisles of the Wilderness came suddenly the sound of battle—not of skirmishing, nor of a mere reconnoissance such as cavalry might have made, but of furious battle, and nearer and nearer it rolled, while at the same time increased on his front the fight which had proceeded all day where Lee in person was keeping his centre occupied. So near and astonishing rolled the din of battle on the right that the officers rose and sought their horses, and one of them, going down to the road, gazed westward. The sight he saw in the distance was one to astound him. "My God! here they come," he cried, and dashed for his horse. The distant road was packed as far as the eye could see with the terrible débris of a routed army—men, horses, wagons —all mingled in one indiscriminate and terrible panic. Happily for Hooker he had as brave and devoted men about him as ever faced death for a cause, and he had troops enough to fill any breach which Lee's army could make and still leave others behind. Officers and couriers were sent in all directions to order fresh troops to the threatened point. Sickles and Pleasanton and Barlow were summoned back to Hazel Grove to fill the gap they had left in the morning. Berry and Hays were transferred from beyond Chancellorsville, and the reserve artillery was rushed forward to the Fairview Heights, south-east of Hazel Grove, to hold Jackson in check at all hazards and, if possible, save Hooker's army. It was a close graze, but though the defeat was irrevocable, the army was saved from destruction by an event which is one of the strange tragedies of

history. Jackson, in the hour of victory, was shot by some of his own men. This is how it happened.

It was nearly dusk, and still Jackson kept driving on. His objective now was Hooker's centre at Chancellorsville, a mile and a half ahead, and his line of retreat on the United States Ford Road, a half mile beyond. Riding among his victorious but well-nigh exhausted troops, he continually urged them to keep their order. "Keep your places—keep your places; there is more work to do," he said to the officers. But his own work was almost done.

Though so far Lee's audacious tactics had attained complete success, they were now to result in a misfortune, at the cost of which, as he said on hearing it, any victory would be dear. As the dusk fell on Hooker's extreme right wing in irrevocable rout, fleeing behind the protection of the artillery massed on the eminence of Hazel Grove, near his right centre, Jackson, finding the pursuit slacken in the confusion of the dusky woods, and fearing to lose the richest fruit of his brilliant victory, rode forward on a reconnoissance, giving orders right and left, to such officers as he saw, to get their men in order and "push forward." "Push right ahead, Lane; right ahead," he said to one; to another: "Press them; cut them off from the United States Ford, Hill; press them." His lines were being straightened out for the next onward sweep on Chancellorsville itself, and he passed on through them, along the Plank Road toward where the Federal reserves were, with flying axes and bayonets, industriously trying with Berry's troops to get some sort of entrenchments and barricades along the

Fairview Heights before the next onslaught came. As he passed forward he, with a wave of the hand toward the front, directed an officer of an infantry regiment lying in a small clearing to watch in that direction, and fire on whatever came from there. Having ridden so close to the Federal lines that their voices and axes could be clearly heard, he turned back, it is said, to hasten Hill's advance, and a moment later the road on which he was riding was swept by a sudden storm of canister from guns posted on the enemy's line to sweep the highway. Swerving aside to get out of the line of fire directly down the road, Jackson and his attendants turned at a gallop in the darkness into the clearing, almost immediately in front of the infantry line which he had a little before ordered to fire on whatever came from that way. They obeyed his command all too well. As the group of horsemen emerged with a rush from the wood and galloped down on them in the dusk, and the guns rattled in the thickets behind them, from the dark line stretched across the clearing came a blaze of fire, and Hooker's army was saved from instant destruction. In the midst of the most brilliant achievement of his brilliant career, Stonewall Jackson's career ended and passed into history. At the first unexpected volley a number of men fell dead or badly wounded and others flung themselves from their horses to avoid the next volley. Jackson's right hand was hurt and his left arm and shoulder were badly shattered. His horse, terrified and suddenly released from the master's guiding hand, wheeled and dashed back into the wood toward the enemy, where the overhanging

boughs tore the rider's face and almost swept him out of the saddle. Jackson, however, managed to keep his seat, and after a little stopped him, and turned back toward his own lines, where Captain Wilbourn, of his staff, having caught the reins, the survivors of those with him lifted him down and made him lie on the ground to avoid the rain of bullets that was now sweeping over them. Hill had now come up and recognized him, and Morrison and Smith and Leigh, of Hill's staff, aided him to move on toward his own lines, and when a sleet of bullets and canister swept about them, laid him down in the ditch beside the road and protected him by interposing their own bodies between him and the line of fire. For a moment the range shifted, the enemy having changed from canister to shell, and again they moved on painfully. Then Jackson gave his last battle order. General Pender riding by, pushing his brigade to the front under the terrible fire, saw the sad procession, and asked who was hurt. "A Confederate officer," was the reply, in accordance with Jackson's command. But Pender recognized him, and springing from his horse, spoke his grief. Then he added that the artillery fire was so deadly that he was afraid he should have to fall back. The words aroused Jackson from his half-fainting condition. Pushing aside those who supported him, he raised himself to his full height. "You must hold your ground, General Pender. You must hold out to the last, sir." It was the epitome at once of his own life and of the Southern cause. It was his last order until, with the light fading from his eyes forever, as he was passing over the river to rest under the shade

of the trees, he murmured once more for A. P. Hill to pass his infantry forward. As he was being borne from the field on a litter carried on men's shoulders, the man at his wounded shoulder was shot down and the litter fell, throwing Jackson heavily on his wounded shoulder, and he sustained an injury to which later many attributed his death. At 2 A. M., by the fitful light afforded in a field hospital, his arm was amputated. As he regained consciousness his first question, it is said, was whether Stuart had received his order to take command. When toward morning Stuart, who had arrived after midnight from Ely's Ford, where he was about to attack Averell's cavalry force and had taken charge, sent Major Pendleton to announce that Hill had been seriously wounded, and the men were in great confusion, and to ask what he wished done, he made a brave attempt to rally his sinking forces, but in vain. "For a moment," says Dr. McGuire, "we believed he had succeeded; for his nostrils dilated and his eye flashed with his old fire; but it was only for a moment. His face relaxed again, and presently he answered, very feebly and sadly: 'I don't know, I can't tell. Say to General Stuart he must do what he thinks best.' And he sank again into sleep."

To Jackson's fall, at the moment when his victorious troops should have been pressing forward with their irresistible force to capture Chancellorsville and the road to the United States Ford, Henderson and most other well-informed critics attribute the failure to destroy utterly Hooker's army that night. Hill, who alone knew anything of his plans, had been seriously

wounded also, and Boswell, Jackson's engineer, sent to pilot the advancing line to the White House, had been killed. The respite gained by his fall enabled Hooker to readjust his lines and cover his right with the corps of Couch and Slocum, and to send Sickles, who had come hurrying back to the strong position at Hazel Grove and supported Pleasanton's artillery posted there, to make about midnight a strong assault on Stuart's right where, south of the Plank Road, Lane's hard-fought brigade awaited them in the woods, while the artillery tore the tree-tops and cut down great boughs above their heads. The assault was repulsed; but the commanding position of Hazel Grove and Fairview Heights, between Jackson's force and Lee's, which Jackson would inevitably have carried had he been able to make his next assault while the panic lasted, was saved. And Lee had to fight again next day with all his might to reap the fruits of his audacity. Happily for his army, his genius was equal to the emergency.

No one knew so well as Lee the magnitude of the disaster that had befallen him in the loss of Jackson. He had early gauged his abilities as a soldier. On the 2d of October, 1862, after the battle of Sharpsburg, when the Army of Northern Virginia was reorganized in two corps, Lee, in recommending Longstreet and Jackson for their respective commands, wrote of Jackson: "My opinion of General Jackson has been greatly enhanced during this expedition. He is true, honest, and brave; has a single eye to the good of the service, and spares no exertion to accomplish his

object." His opinion of him had steadily risen. The two men thoroughly understood and honored each other and were worthy of each other's regard. When Lee learned of Jackson's wound, he sent him a warm message. "Give him my affectionate regards, and tell him to make haste and get well and come back to me as soon as he can. He has lost his left arm, but I have lost my right." And later he wrote: "Any victory would be dear at such a price. I know not how to replace him." His formal letter was written on the evening of the morrow of Jackson's fall, when having carried by assault Hooker's first lines, and supplanted him in the position which he had boasted the strongest on the planet, he received a note telling him of Jackson's wound. Surrounded by his victorious troops in the full tide of their triumph, he penned to his wounded lieutenant his reply:

GENERAL: I have just received your note informing me that you were wounded. I cannot express my regret at the occurrence. Could I have directed events, I should have chosen, for the good of the country, to be disabled in your stead.

I congratulate you upon the victory which is due to your skill and energy.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE, *General.*

No wonder his staff officer, who received his reply from him, says that "as he gave expression to the thoughts of his exalted mind, he forgot his genius that won the day in his reverence for the generosity that refused the glory."

Had Hooker been the equal of his antagonists, he had a great opportunity on the morning of the 3d. He held with a superior force a position between them strongly fortified, and the heights of Hazel Grove and Fairview, extending southwardly, cut them in two. But he fatuously threw away his advantage. He withdrew Sickles from Hazel Grove. Lee sent word across the wide gap to renew the assault at the earliest moment possible, and when the first light came and disclosed the commanding position of Hazel Grove as the key to the situation, Stuart immediately prepared to seize it. Swinging his right around and forward to get closer to Lee, he began a furious assault, and although the strong point of Fairview was long defended with the utmost bravery, in the end the Confederate veterans, by this time informed of their old commander's fall, and charging with the battle-cry, "Remember Jackson!" swept all before them, securing the strong position of Hazel Grove. Lee on his side directed the assault with confidence. Shaken by the misfortune to his right wing, Hooker was already looking to his safety, and was endeavoring to withdraw to a second and closer line, well in rear of Chancellorsville, lying above and between Fighting Run and Mineral Spring Run and covering the United States Ford Road, his line of retreat. Heth, on the left, commanding Hill's Division, came forward, Anderson and McLaws on the centre and the right, where Lee himself in person directed his fervid veterans. It was a fierce day, for Hooker's army knew that their salvation depended on holding Lee back. Fairview, where the enemy was strongly posted

with thirty guns heavily supported, took long to capture. For hours the battle raged through the woods, which were now aflame for miles and added to the horror of the occasion. The utmost courage was shown on both sides. Hill, on the left, was repulsed again and again, but his second and third lines came forward to aid the first line. So resolute was the resistance that at one time all three of his lines were mingled together, and once word was sent to Stuart that the ammunition was exhausted and they would have to fall back; to which Stuart replied, as Jackson would have done in his place, that they still had the bayonet. Thirty guns under the gallant officers, Colonel Thomas H. Carter and Colonel Hilary P. Jones, were massed on the captured heights of Hazel Grove, and enfiladed with deadly effect the lines of the Federals, and Stuart, putting himself at the head of his troops and chanting, "Old Joe Hooker, won't you come out of the Wilderness?" led them in a final charge on the entrenchments which swept everything before it. Hooker's right having been thus broken, a general advance made with unflinching determination swept him back all along his line, leaving Lee in possession of Chancellorsville and the whole position which Hooker had held.

During the morning the Federal commander was struck down by a fragment of a shattered pillar of the porch of the Chancellor mansion, which was shivered by a cannon-ball, where he stood superintending his operations. The report spread that he was killed, and to contradict it, as soon as he recovered consciousness he mounted his horse and rode down his lines. He was,

however, unable to remain in the saddle, and was in a state of semi-consciousness from time to time, the command devolving temporarily on Couch.

As his lines swept forward on Chancellorsville, driving the fiercely fighting enemy before them, Lee himself rode forward to encourage his men and to take charge of the position. It was the signal for what soldiers rarely see even once in a lifetime. His already victorious troops were set wild by his presence, and in the midst of the horrors of the field acclaimed him to the skies, the wounded adding their feeble voices to the cheers of those who still fought the guns. "His first care," says one of his staff, "was for the wounded of both armies, and he was foremost at the burning mansion [of Chancellorsville], where some of them lay."

It was at this moment that the note reached him from Jackson, announcing that he was badly wounded, and that he sent him the reply that the victory was due to his skill and energy, and that could he have directed events, he would have chosen for the good of the country to be disabled in his stead. It was characteristic of Jackson, when his admired commander's noble reply was brought to him where he lay wounded, to say: "General Lee is very kind, but he should give the praise to God."

## CHAPTER XII

### LEE'S AUDACITY—SALEM CHURCH

HOOKER'S first positions had been carried, and Lee was ready to assault the second position, where, behind the strong fortifications which he had prepared for the emergency, Hooker, now much shaken, had made his final stand, when information arrived which must have discomfited a less resolute and constant mind. The news reached Lee that Sedgwick, who had hitherto been held on the river by Early, and had recrossed to the northern side, had now not only recrossed again, but had carried Marye's Heights, driven Early back, and intervened between him and Lee, and was marching by the Plank Road with his force of 30,000 men on Lee's rear. In fact, Hooker had sent Sedgwick urgent orders to come to his aid. Lee had already 60,000 men in his front in line of battle, and if Hooker was stunned and shaken, he had at his side such redoubtable fighters as Meade, Slocum, Humphreys, Couch, Reynolds, Sickles, and Pleasanton, with a host besides. But the *mens æqua in arduis* which inspired Lee's breast was equal to this difficulty also. Wilcox's Brigade, of Anderson's Division, lying above Banks's Ford at the point nearest to Sedgwick's route, was ordered to retard his advance, and, to bar his way, McLaws was despatched to Salem Church, the point of junction of the road from Banks's

Ford with the Plank Road from Chancellorsville to Fredericksburg. When Sedgwick broke through Early's line on the heights of Fredericksburg, Early fell back, covering the road to Richmond. Sedgwick then pushed away the small force on his right, and was now driving for the rear of Lee's right. Wilcox, across the Plank Road, fought stubbornly as he fell back to Salem Church, where, deploying his men under cover of the woodland, McLaws awaited Sedgwick's advance across the open fields in his front. The unexpected fire at close range was deadly, and advancing two of his brigades at the nick of time, he drove Sedgwick's first line back on his rear, which had not yet got deployed. "Now ensued," says Alexander, "one of the most brilliant and important of the minor affairs of the war." The fight, though short, was bloody, and Sedgwick, having lost something like 5,000 men, was content to make a stand on the ridge above Banks's Ford, which he fortified strongly. Next morning, in view of the gravity of the situation, with 60,000 men in his front and twenty-odd thousand but a few miles behind him, Lee himself took personal charge of the operations. Leaving "only what remained of Jackson's old corps"—some 20,000 men—to hold Hooker in his breastworks, he took Anderson's three remaining brigades to Salem Church, and as soon as Sedgwick's new position could be reconnoitred, he ordered the assault. It was a brief fight, for it began late, but it was fierce while it lasted. Assailing, however, both in front and flank, Lee's ragged veterans drove the enemy from their position with a heavy loss, and that night, under cover of

the rain and fog, Sedgwick, who had been left by Hooker to fight alone, withdrew across the Rappahannock by the nearest ford, leaving Lee to turn again on Hooker, penned in his fortifications by Lee's containing force of one-third of his numbers.[1] Lee promptly led back to Chancellorsville his victorious brigades to fall on Hooker as they had just fallen on his lieutenant.

Hooker, however, had no stomach for more, and that night (the 5th) while Lee was making ready to assault him next morning, he, under cover of the storm and darkness, retreated across the Rappahannock. He was badly demoralized even if his army was not, and had allowed the plan which he had elaborated with so much satisfaction while safe beyond the Rappahannock, to be smashed in pieces by Lee when in the very act of being carried out. He had lain in his breastworks all day, held by a third of his numbers, while one of his lieutenants, in the act of executing his orders, was being hammered to pieces by Lee, hardly a half dozen miles away. No greater exhibition of daring genius on the one side and of failure on the other was shown during the war, and the charge used to be made that Hooker's defeat was due to the fact that he was under the influence of liquor; but this charge seems to have been disposed of, and it has even been suggested that the lack of stimulant was the cause of his inertia. The only other excuse that has been offered for him is, that he was knocked down and stunned during the battle. The true reason is that he

[1] Steele's "American Campaigns," p. 351, citing Swinton and E. P. Alexander.

had been so hopelessly outgeneralled and outfought by his opponent, that he had been thrown in a maze, in which his brain had almost ceased to act.

As soon as he was safe across the Rappahannock, he issued (on May 6th) a general order to his army congratulating it on its achievements. It contained a remarkable sentence, which will be found quoted in a letter of Lee's, below. His army had, indeed, fought admirably. The fault lay with the commander. He even wrote to Mr. Lincoln a few days later (May 13): "Is it asking too much to inquire your opinion of my Order No. 49? Jackson is dead," he added, "and Lee beats McClellan with his untruthful bulletins." Thus he achieved the distinction of being probably the only man in the world who ever charged Lee with untruthfulness. We may imagine what was the inward thought of that sometimes grim humorist. For the Army of the Potomac had lost since Hooker crossed the Rappahannock 17,287 officers and men, killed and wounded, and 13 guns, and over 6,000 officers and men were reported captured or missing. The Army of Northern Virginia had also suffered heavily—10,277 killed and wounded and about 2,000 captured or missing.[1]

What Mr. Lincoln thought of Hooker's order, No. 49, is possibly not known; what Lee thought is known. In a letter to his wife, dated May 20, he writes: "I learn that our poor wounded are doing very well. General Hooker is airing himself north of the Rappahannock, and again threatening us with a crossing. It

[1] Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson," II, pp. 466, 467.

was reported last night that he had brought his pontoons to the river, but I hear nothing of him this morning. I think he will consider it a few days. He has published a gratulatory order to his troops, telling them they have covered themselves with new laurels, have destroyed our stores, communications, thousands of our choice troops, captured prisoners in their fortifications, filling the country with fear and consternation. 'Profoundly loyal and conscious of its own strength, the Army of the Potomac will give or decline battle whenever its interests or honor may demand. It will also be the guardian of its own history and its own honor.' All of which is signed by our old friend, S. Williams, A. A. G. It shows, at least, he is so far unhurt, and is so far good, but as to the truth of history I will not speak. May the great God have you all in His holy keeping and soon unite us again."

On the 10th of May Stonewall Jackson died of pneumonia, resulting from his wound. He had, for a brief period after his arm was amputated on the field, appeared to be doing well, and hopes were entertained of His recovery. By order of General Lee he was removed from the proximity of Chancellorsville to the home of a Dr. Chandler, near Guinea Station, on the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad, some fifty miles from Richmond, where he was made comfortable in an outhouse which still stands by the railway line, having been preserved by the pious care of the women of Virginia.

The question has often been debated whether the chief credit for the victory at Chancellorsville should

be assigned to Lee or to Jackson. Lee, himself, has settled it in a letter which he wrote to Mrs. Jackson, in which he states that the responsibility for the flank attack by Jackson—that is, for the tactics which made it possible—necessarily rested on himself. He repeated the statement in a letter to his friend, Professor Bledsoe. And apart from his conclusive statement, this is the judgment of Jackson's biographer, General Henderson. Commenting on the question as to whether to Lee or Jackson the credit was due for the daring plan of the campaign against Pope, Henderson says: "We have record of few enterprises of greater daring than that which was then decided on; and no matter from whose brain it emanated, on Lee fell the burden of the responsibility; on his shoulders, and on his alone, rested the honor of the Confederate arms, the fate of Richmond, the independence of the South; and if we may suppose, so consonant was the design proposed with the strategy which Jackson had already practised, that it was to him its inception was due, it is still to Lee that we must assign the higher merit. It is easy to conceive; it is less easy to execute. But to risk cause and country, name and reputation, on a single throw, and to abide the issue with unflinching heart, is the supreme exhibition of the soldier's fortitude." [1]

It is, indeed, no disparagement from Jackson's fame to declare that, if possible, even more brilliant than the afternoon attack on Hooker's right, which routed that wing and began the demoralization of his army, was the final attack, when Lee, who had left Early

[1] *Ibid.*, II, p. 582.

with only enough men at Fredericksburg to hold Sedgwick in check, learning that Sedgwick had forced a crossing and was marching on his rear, turned and, leaving only a fragment of his army to hold the shaken Hooker in his breastworks, fell on Sedgwick and hurled him back across the river, and then, turning again, marched on Hooker's position and so awed him that he was glad to retreat by night, broken and dismayed, across the Rappahannock.

The victory of Chancellorsville, in which Lee with 62,000 men and 170 guns completely routed Hooker on his own ground, with 130,000 men and 448 guns, was, declares Henderson, "the most brilliant feat of arms of the century."

Thus, Lee had destroyed the reputation of more generals than any captain had destroyed since Napoleon.

After Chancellorsville the Army of Northern Virginia was reorganized in three corps instead of two, as formerly. Longstreet commanded the first, as heretofore, now commanding the three divisions of McLaws, Pickett, and Hood; and Ewell and A. P. Hill were created lieutenant-generals for the purpose, and were put in command of the Second and Third Corps, respectively, the former comprising the three divisions of Rodes, Early, and Johnson; the latter the three divisions of Anderson, Heth, and Pender. Thus, Ewell became Stonewall Jackson's successor.

To each corps were attached five battalions of artillery, two of which were in reserve, the total number of guns being 270. The total number of troops of all

arms was 68,352, of which 54,356 were infantry, 4,460 were artillery, and 9,536 were cavalry. "This artillery organization was," says Steele in his "American Campaigns," "the first of its kind ever employed, and it has since been adopted by the leading nations of Europe."

It was a fighting force which in its personnel has rarely been equalled in the history of war, composed largely of that volunteer soldiery, animated by love of country and the spirit of free institutions, which so good a critic as Stonewall Jackson declared the best soldiers on earth. Lee's confidence in them was displayed when, a little later, he threw them against Meade's imposing position on the heights of Gettysburg, in the great strategic move which he was even now planning. With the object of guarding the capital of the Confederacy against another attempt such as he had already frustrated four times, at such cost to the South, Lee was now planning carrying the war into Africa. To do this with the greatest possible assurance of success attainable, it was necessary to have as strong an army as possible. Sharpsburg had shown that neither gallantry nor brilliant handling of men was sufficient to render invasion successful when it brought into the field such an army as the North could oppose to it. And as moderate as was the size of Lee's army now, there was always danger that he might be called on to detach a part of his force to protect distant fields. Longstreet had been detached before Chancellorsville to defend the approaches on the south side of the James, in Virginia, and this possibly had enabled Hooker to escape across the Rappahannock. Such, indeed, was

Henderson's opinion. Now, the whole seaboard of the South was in deep anxiety, and the clamors of the political representatives of the threatened regions were unremitting. Lee had the responsibility of defending Richmond and of conducting the war; but he lacked the power to dispose of the troops in the field so as best to carry out the plans which he believed necessary for the proper performance of his task. As has been already said, the form of government of the Confederacy, however suited for peace, was inefficient for the conduct of a great revolution. So many conflicting interests had to be reconciled, so many selfish ambitions reckoned with, so many divergent views harmonized, that in times of crisis the exigencies often came and passed before the proper authority requisite to provide means to meet it could be secured. The present crisis furnished an illustration of this unhappy condition.

It was plain enough to Lee's clear vision what steps should be taken to meet this situation; but he lacked the means to make his views effectual. He was not thwarted and set aside as the commanding generals on the Union side were, but he was impeded and hindered in his plans by the action of the government, who, whatever the emergency, felt called on to consult the views of those they represented. He wrote on June 13 to the Secretary of War: "You can realize the difficulty of operating in any offensive movement with this army, if it has to be divided to cover Richmond. It seems to me useless to attempt it with the force against it. You will have seen its effective strength

by the last returns." Mr. Davis wrote him, a few days later, that the attempt was being made to organize a force for local defence, and that he hoped it would be possible to defend the city without drawing from the force in the field more heavily than may be necessary for the duty of outposts and reconnoissances. But General Lee had a bolder and loftier object in view than the mere defence of Richmond. He would by his strategy not only relieve Richmond, but possibly secure peace. And he saw clearly that the chances of peace were dependent on his success, as he saw that his chances of success were dwindling with his dwindling resources.

"At this distance," he wrote Mr. Davis, "I can see no benefit to be derived from maintaining a larger force on the southern coast during the unhealthy months of summer and autumn, and I think that a part at least of the troops in North Carolina, and of those under General Beauregard, can be employed at this time to great advantage in Virginia. If an army could be organized under the command of General Beauregard, and pushed forward to Culpeper Court House, threatening Washington from that direction, it would not only effect a diversion most favorable for this army, but would, I think, relieve us of any apprehension of an attack upon Richmond during our absence. . . . If success should attend the operations of this army—and what I now suggest would greatly increase the probability of that result—we might even hope to compel the recall of some of the enemy's troops from the West. . . . The good effects of beginning to

assemble an army at Culpeper Court House would, I think, soon become apparent, and the movement might be increased in importance as the result might appear to justify."

And again, under date of the 25th of June, to President Davis, he wrote: "You will see that apprehension for the safety of Washington and their own territory has aroused the Federal Government and people to great exertions, and it is incumbent upon us to call forth all our energies. In addition to the 100,000 troops called for by President Lincoln to defend the frontier of Pennsylvania, you will see that he is concentrating other organized forces in Maryland. It is stated in the papers that they are all being withdrawn from Suffolk, and according to General Buckner's report, Burnside and his corps are recalled from Kentucky. . . . I think this should liberate the troops in the Carolinas, and enable Generals Buckner and Bragg to accomplish something in Ohio. It is plain that if all the Federal army is concentrated upon this it will result in our accomplishing nothing and being compelled to return to Virginia. If the plan that I suggested the other day, of organizing an army, even in effigy, under General Beauregard at Culpeper Court House, can be carried into effect, much relief will be afforded. If even the brigades in Virginia and North Carolina, which Generals D. H. Hill and Elzey think cannot be spared, were ordered there at once, and General Beauregard were sent there, if he had to return to South Carolina, it would do more to protect both States from marauding expeditions of the enemy than anything

else. I have not sufficient troops to maintain my communications, and therefore have to abandon them. I think I can throw General Hooker's army across the Potomac, and draw troops from the South, embarrassing their plan of campaign in a measure, if I can do nothing more and have to return." [1]

It was a tragic situation, this general, on whose genius hung the fate of the Confederacy, begging in vain for an army, "even in effigy," to post on his flank and afford him some relief while he pursued the strategy which alone could save his cause.

[1] Colonel W. H. Taylor's "General Lee," p. 216.

## CHAPTER XIII

### GETTYSBURG

Possibly, it may appear to some a fault in Lee as a soldier that he accounted the abilities of his enemy at less than their true value. Study of the war must lead to the conviction that neither courage nor fortitude was the monopoly of either side. The men who withstood at Gaines's Mill and Malvern Hill the fierce charges of the Southern infantry; the men who marched down the rolling plain of Second Manassas against Stonewall Jackson's lines of flame, and dashed, like the surging sea, wave upon wave, on Lee's iron ranks at Antietam; the men who charged impregnable defences at Marye's Heights; the men who climbed the slippery steeps of Chattanooga and swept the crimson plain of Franklin; the men who maintained their positions under the leaden sleet of the Wilderness and seized the Bloody Angle at Spottsylvania; the men who died at Cold Harbor, rank on rank, needed to ask no odds for valor of any troops on earth, not even of the men who followed Lee.

In a recent discussion of this subject, the philosophical Charles Francis Adams, himself a veteran of the Army of the Potomac, whose laurels were won in opposing Lee, quotes with approval Lee's proud declara-

tion that "there never were such men in an army before. They will go anywhere and do anything if properly led." "And for myself," he adds, "I do not think the estimate thus expressed was exaggerated. Speaking deliberately, having faced some portions of the Army of Northern Virginia at the time, and having reflected much on the occurrences of that momentous period, I do not believe that any more formidable or better organized and animated force was ever set in motion than that which Lee led across the Potomac in the early summer of 1863. It was essentially an army of fighters—men who individually or in the mass could be depended upon for any feat of arms in the power of mere mortals to accomplish. They would blench at no danger. This Lee from experience knew. He had tested them; they had full confidence in him."[1]

Lee's error, such as it was, lay not in overrating his own weapon, but in undervaluing the larger weapon of his antagonist. Yet, if this underrating of his enemy was a fault, it was a noble one; and how often it led to victory! Lee's success was due largely to his splendid audacity.

If, in attacking the redoubtable forces of Meade on the heights of Gettysburg, he overestimated the ability of that army of sixty thousand Southern men who wore the gray, who can wonder? In their rags and tatters, ill-shod and ill-armed, they were the flower of the South. Had he not seen them on every field since Mechanicsville? Seen them, under his masterly tactics and inspiring eye, sweep McClellan's mighty army from

[1] Address at Lexington, Va., cited *ante*.

the very gates of Richmond? Seen them send Pope, routed and demoralized, to the shelter of the fortifications around Alexandria? Seen them repel McClellan's furious charges on the field of Antietam, and hold him at bay with a fresh army at his back? Seen them drive Burnside's valorous men back to their entrenchments? Seen them roll Hooker's great army up as a scroll and hurl it back across the Rappahannock? What was disparity of numbers to him? What strength of position? His greatest victories had been plucked by daring, which hitherto fortune had proved the wisest of calculation, from the jaws of apparent impossibility. Besides, who knew so well as he the necessity of striking such a blow? The South-west was being gradually conquered. Grant's brilliant work before Vicksburg had almost completed what Fort Donelson and Shiloh had begun. Vicksburg, the last stronghold of the Confederacy on the Mississippi, was in the last throes of a fatal siege, and, on the same day that Lee faced his fate at the heights of Gettysburg, fell before the indomitable Grant, and the Confederate South was cut in two. His delivering battle here under such conditions has been often criticised. He is charged with having violated a canon of war. He replied to his critics once that even so dull a man as himself could see clearly enough his mistakes after they were committed.

This battle has been fought over so often that it is not necessary to go fully over its details now, and yet in a volume which deals with Lee's military genius some account is necessary of the great battle which appears to have been the turning point of the great

civil strife. Gettysburg was only one factor in the unbroken chain of proof to establish his boldness and his resolution. Southern historians have unanimously placed the chief responsibility for his defeat on Longstreet, whose tendency to be dilatory and obstinate has been noted in connection with the fields of Seven Pines, Frazier's Farm, and Second Manassas, and whose slowness and surliness now probably cost Lee this battle, and possibly cost the South, if not its independence, at least the offer of honorable terms. And in this estimate of him many other competent critics concur. "Lee," says Henderson, in his "Life of Stonewall Jackson," "lost the battle of Gettysburg because he allowed his second in command to argue instead of marching." [1] It is impossible in reading his writings not to be struck by his self-esteem, and sheer jealousy is often written plain on his pages. That he should have envied Jackson and hated Early is perhaps not to be wondered at. But that he should have assailed Lee with what appears not far from rancor can only be attributed to jealousy. Lee, we know, held him in high esteem, speaking of him as his "old war horse," and was too magnanimous ever to give countenance to the furious clamor which later assailed his sturdy if opinionated and bull-headed lieutenant. It was a magnanimity which Longstreet ill requited when long afterward—years after Lee's death—he attempted to reply to his critics. Longstreet seems, indeed, to have been not unlike a bull, ponderous and dull until aroused, but once aroused by the sight of blood, terrible in his fury,

[1] "Life of Stonewall Jackson," II, p. 488.

and a ferocious fighter. But the question here is, did Lee err or not in fighting the battle.

Longstreet with two divisions had been absent from Lee's army since soon after the battle of Fredericksburg. He had at his request been sent to south-side Virginia to defend the line of the Blackwater against an advance from Norfolk, on the south side of the James. In anticipation of Hooker's advance around Lee's left, he had been ordered to rejoin Lee, but "his movements were so delayed that though the battle of Chancellorsville did not occur until many days after he was expected to join, his force was absent when it occurred." [1] This, too, when his instructions had been "repeated with urgent insistence."

Longstreet declared long afterward that he now had a plan of his own. He not infrequently claims the credit for the plans acted on if they proved successful. His idea was that the proper strategy would be for him to join Joseph E. Johnston, then near Tullahoma, so as to enable him to crush Rosecrans; then march through Tennessee and Kentucky and threaten Ohio. This view he urged both on Mr. Seddon, the Confederate Secretary of War, and on Lee himself. Neither acceded to his plan—mainly, he says, because it would force Lee to divide his army.[2] Assuredly a sound enough reason. His account of his interview with Lee has been noted by a thoughtful student of the Gettysburg campaign, himself a gallant participant in the battle, as reflecting Longstreet's mental attitude both toward

[1] "Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government."
[2] Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. V, p. 55.

the campaign and toward Lee.[1] It was, at least, not one of cordial subordination and support.

In brief, the battle of Gettysburg came of the necessity to "yield to a stronger power than General Burnside." Feeling the imperative necessity of relieving Virginia of the burden that was crushing her to the earth, Lee determined, as the summer of 1863 drew near, to manœuvre Hooker from his impregnable position on the Stafford Heights, and to transfer the theatre of war to Northern soil.

For this reason Lee, boldly flanking Hooker, who, now secure on the further side of the Rappahannock, was boasting still, marched his army into Maryland and Pennsylvania, not for conquest, but for subsistence, and to employ once more, at need, the strategy which he knew would compel the withdrawal of the forces still threatening Richmond.

It testifies his foresight that he had already predicted that a pitched battle would probably be fought at York, or at Gettysburg.

Yet, when the time came, Lee's meeting with Meade's army at the latter place was to some extent a surprise to him; for his able and gallant cavalry commander, Stuart, on whom he had relied to keep him informed touching the enemy, had been led by the ardor of a successful raid further afield than had been planned, and the presence of Meade's army in force was unsuspected until too late to decline battle.[2] Heth's Division had sought the

[1] "Review of the Gettysburg Campaign," by Colonel David Gregg McIntosh, p. 9.

[2] That Stuart was in any way responsible for this is denied by Colonel John S. Mosby in his "Stuart in the Gettysburg Campaign."

place for imperatively needed supplies, and found the Union troops holding it, and a battle was precipitated. Lee's plan of battle failed here, but the student of war knows how it failed and why. It failed because his lieutenants failed, and his orders were not carried out —possibly because he called on his intrepid army for more than human strength was able to achieve. "Had I had Jackson at Gettysburg," he once said, "I should, so far as man can judge, have won that battle."

It was the first week of June when Lee, leaving A. P. Hill to occupy the lines at Fredericksburg and cover Richmond, withdrew the major portion of his force to Culpeper, Ewell leading and Longstreet following. Lee moved secretly, sending Ewell by Spottsylvania Court House to escape observation; but observation balloons and spies discovered something of his movements to Hooker, who notified his government and without avail asked leave to "pitch into his rear." He crossed Sedgwick over the Rappahannock, on June 5, to demonstrate against Hill's right on the River Road to Richmond; but as Lee, after making a personal reconnoissance of the position, recognized the move as a feint and paid little attention to it, he withdrew Sedgwick again. Hooker now knew that Lee was beginning some movement, but thought it was merely a cavalry raid, with possibly a heavy column of infantry in support, and he sent Pleasanton with his cavalry, "stiffened by about 3,000 infantry," to disperse and destroy the cavalry forces in the vicinity of Culpeper. At Culpeper Lee waited for a few days and rested and reviewed his cavalry. Lee wrote his wife

of the review. "It was a splendid sight," he said; "the men and horses looked well. They had recuperated since last fall. Stuart was in all his glory. Your sons and nephews are well and flourishing. The country here looks very green and pretty, notwithstanding the ravages of war. What a beautiful world God in His loving-kindness to His creatures has given us. What a shame that men endowed with reason and knowledge of right should mar His gifts." The day following this review, a short distance away on the rolling plain above Kelly's Ford, Stuart and Pleasanton, the latter, as stated, "stiffened by about 3,000 infantry," fought possibly the greatest cavalry battle that has ever taken place. Alexander's artillery was moved over in that direction, to be ready at need; but was kept in concealment, as Lee did not wish the presence of his army to be known. After several hours of stiff fighting, Pleasanton was driven back across the Rappahannock with the loss of 500 prisoners, 3 pieces of artillery, and several colors, having himself captured a good number of prisoners. Hooker, as at Chancellorsville, found this a cause of congratulation, and wrote a report quite in the tone of a victor. Pleasanton, he reported, "pressed Stuart three miles, capturing 200 prisoners and a battle-flag. Our cavalry made many hand-to-hand combats, always driving the enemy before them."

Lee's plan now was to sweep over the mountains and on through the valley of Virginia, clearing it of Milroy's army, which was proving a pest there, cross over into Maryland, and, passing through that State,

invade Pennsylvania and threaten at once Harrisburg, Baltimore, and Washington. This, he hoped, would lead to peace, or, failing this, would at least "throw Hooker's army across the Potomac."

Before leaving Culpeper, Lee, on the 10th of June, wrote President Davis the following letter, which shows how clearly he saw the need of making peace :

*Mr. President:* I beg leave to bring to your attention a subject with reference to which I have thought that the course pursued by writers and speakers among us has had a tendency to interfere with our success. I refer to the manner in which the demonstration of a desire for peace at the North has been received in our country.

I think there can be no doubt that journalists and others at the South, to whom the Northern people naturally look for a reflection of our opinions, have met these indications in such wise as to weaken the hands of the advocates of a pacific policy on the part of the Federal Government, and give much encouragement to those who urge a continuance of the war.

Recent political movements in the United States and the comments of influential newspapers upon them have attracted my attention particularly to this subject, which I deem not unworthy of the consideration of your Excellency, nor inappropriate to be adverted to by me in view of its connection with the situation of military affairs.

Conceding to our enemies the superiority claimed by them in numbers, resources, and all the means and appliances for carrying on the war, we have no right to look for exemption from the military consequences of a vigorous use of these advantages, except by such deliverance as the mercy of Heaven may accord to the

courage of our soldiers, the justice of our cause, and the constancy and prayers of our people. While making the most we can of the means of resistance we possess, and gratefully accepting the measure of success with which God has blessed our efforts as an earnest of His approval and favor, it is nevertheless the part of wisdom to carefully measure and husband our strength, and not to expect from it more than in the ordinary course of affairs it is capable of accomplishing. We should not, therefore, conceal from ourselves that our resources in men are constantly diminishing, and the disproportion in this respect between us and our enemies, if they continue united in their efforts to subjugate, is steadily augmenting. The decrease of the aggregate of this army as disclosed by the returns affords an illustration of this fact. Its effective strength varies from time to time, but the falling off in its aggregate shows that its ranks are growing weaker and that its losses are not supplied by recruits.

Under these circumstances we should neglect no honorable means of dividing and weakening our enemies, that they may feel some of the difficulties experienced by ourselves. It seems to me that the most effectual mode of accomplishing this object now within our reach is to give all the encouragement we can, consistently with truth, to the rising peace party of the North.

Nor do I think we should, in this connection, make nice distinction between those who declare for peace unconditionally and those who advocate it as a means of restoring the Union, however much we may prefer the former.

We should bear in mind that the friends of peace at the North must make concessions to the earnest desire that exists in the minds of their countrymen for a res-

toration of the Union, and that to hold out such a result as an inducement is essential to the success of their party.

Should the belief that peace will bring back the Union become general the war would no longer be supported; and that, after all, is what we are interested in bringing about. When peace is proposed to us it will be time enough to discuss its terms, and it is not the part of prudence to spurn the proposition in advance merely because those who wish to make it believe, or affect to believe, that it will result in bringing us back to the Union. We entertain no such apprehensions, nor doubt that the desire of our people for a distinct and independent national existence will prove as steadfast under the influence of peaceful measures as it has shown itself in the midst of war.

If the views I have indicated meet the approval of your Excellency, you will best know how to give effect to them. Should you deem them inexpedient or impracticable, I think you will nevertheless agree with me that we should at least carefully abstain from measures or expressions that tend to discourage any party whose purpose is peace.

With this statement of my own opinion on the subject, the length of which you will excuse, I leave to your better judgment to determine the proper course to be pursued.

I am, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

R. E. Lee, *General.*

The day after the fight at Kelly's Ford, Lee sent Ewell forward by Mount Royal to the Shenandoah Valley, which he immediately cleared of the enemy. Longstreet was directed to operate so as to embarrass

Hooker as to Lee's movements, and keep him east of the Blue Ridge, at least until Hill could arrive and get in touch with Ewell, and Stuart was set to screen Lee's movements to the west of the Blue Ridge from Hooker, posted to the east of the Blue Ridge, covering the southerly approaches to Washington.

As Lee anticipated, his strategy drew Hooker back toward the Potomac, and Longstreet was moved forward on the eastern side of the Blue Ridge, while A. P. Hill followed Ewell over the mountains into the valley of Virginia, the whole being screened by Stuart's cavalry.

As late as the 12th Hooker wrote Governor Dix that "all of Lee's army, so far as I know, is extended along the immediate bank of the Rappahannock from Hamilton's Crossing to Culpeper. A. P. Hill's Corps is on his right, below Fredericksburg; Ewell's Corps joins his left, reaching to the Rapidan, and beyond that river is Longstreet's Corps." Two days from this time Ewell, who had crossed the Blue Ridge on the 12th, captured Winchester, with some 4,000 prisoners and 29 guns, together with the vast stores collected there, and barely missed capturing Milroy himself, who escaped with a small portion of the garrison.

On the night of the 13th, Hooker, knowing that Lee was engaged in some new enterprise, but not knowing yet what it was, withdrew from before Fredericksburg and headed for the line of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, to cover Washington. Next day Hill, no longer needed on the south bank of the Rappahannock, marched for Culpeper en route for the Valley,

to overtake Lee's other corps. Lee had thus once more manœuvred a great army from an attack on Richmond to the defence of Washington. Hooker was still in a maze, and sent his cavalry westward to force Lee "to show his hand, if he had any in this part of the country." To prevent this "a stiff fight" occurred on the 17th, at Aldie, between Fitz Lee and Gregg, and two days later Pleasanton, "stiffened by an infantry division," flanked Stuart at Middleburg and forced him beyond Upperville. Longstreet sent a division to reinforce Stuart, and on the 23d Lee wrote Mr. Davis that "the attempts to penetrate the mountains have been successfully resisted by General Stuart with the cavalry," and that the enemy had retired to Aldie.

By the middle of the month (June) Lee's advanced corps had crossed the Potomac, and Longstreet was ordered soon afterward to do the same, while Stuart was left to impede Hooker should he attempt to follow across the Potomac, it being left to Stuart's discretion whether to cross east or west of the Blue Ridge; but on crossing he was to cover the right of the army. On the 22d of June, Lee wrote from Berryville, where A. P. Hill had just arrived, directing Ewell to move forward from Shepherdstown toward the Susquehanna, taking the route by Emmetsburg, Chambersburg, and McConnellsburg, keeping his trains on the centre route, and notifying him that Stuart had been directed, if possible, to place himself with three brigades of cavalry on his right, and Imboden had been ordered to his left. Ewell was told "if Harrisburg comes within your means capture it." On the same day Lee wrote

Stuart, expressing concern lest the enemy should "steal a march on us and get across the Potomac before we are aware," and authorizing him, if he found the enemy moving northward, to leave two brigades to guard the Blue Ridge and take care of his rear, to move with his other three brigades into Maryland, place himself in communication with Ewell, and guard his right flank, keeping him informed of the enemy's movements and collecting supplies. This letter was forwarded through Longstreet, who wrote Stuart, advising his leaving by Hopewell Gap and passing in the rear of the enemy, so as not to disclose Lee's plans. Stuart mentioned that Lee had authorized him to use his discretion.

On the 23d Lee wrote Stuart again, confirming the above, but suggesting that should Hooker appear to be moving northward, Stuart had better withdraw to the west of the Blue Ridge and cross the Potomac at Shepherdstown. He however stated that Stuart would be able to judge; he could pass around Hooker's wing and cross the river east of the mountains. "But in either case," he adds, "after crossing the river you must move on and feel the right of Ewell's troops. . . . I think the sooner you cross into Maryland, after to-morrow, the better." Stuart sent Colonel Mosby on a scout to learn if Hooker were crossing the Potomac, and received on the 24th a report that no signs of movement were found. This report was to be sent to General Lee. He moved that night to pass around Hooker's rear and cross the river at Seneca Ford. He had intended to pass through Haymarket and on through Hooker's army; but finding Hancock across

his path in the Bull Run Mountains, he bore farther eastward and passed through Fairfax Station. The détour delayed his crossing of the river till the night of the 27th, when he learned that Hooker had crossed at Edward's Ferry on the 25th and 26th, and was now at Poolesville, Md., en route for Frederick.

Meantime, Lee had passed the rest of his army to the north side of the Potomac, and Hooker's entire army was between Lee and his cavalry. Hill had crossed at Shepherdstown, and Longstreet at Williamsport, on the 24th, the day that Stuart received the report to transmit to Lee that no signs of Hooker's movement had been found. The two corps had united at Hagerstown, and on the 27th were near Chambersburg, secure in the conviction that Hooker was probably still on the south side of the Potomac or Stuart would have notified them.[1] Here Lee issued his famous order to his army, admonishing them to respect non-combatants and private property, and remember that the inhabitants were their fellow citizens. Ewell, marching by Hagerstown and Chambersburg, had reached Carlisle on the 27th with two of his divisions, the third, under Early, having been sent to York. Early was sent eastward across the South Mountain and through Gettysburg, York, and Wrightsville, to cross the Susquehanna by the Columbia bridge and move up the north bank of the river on Harrisburg. Crossing the South Mountain by the Chambersburg pike, Early passed through Gettysburg on the 26th and moved on through York to Wrightsville, respectively twenty-eight and forty

[1] Lee's report, dated 20th January, 1864.

miles from Gettysburg, and was preparing to cross the river when he received orders to rejoin Lee. Ewell, at Carlisle, was about to set out for Harrisburg, whose defences were already being studied by his engineers. It was not until the next night (28th) that Lee learned through a scout that momentous events had taken place in the past few days along the Potomac; that Hooker had crossed the river; had then been relieved and superseded by Meade, and that Meade was now concentrating in his rear between him and Washington. Hooker, on crossing the Potomac, had telegraphed Halleck that he wanted the garrison from Harper's Ferry and Maryland Heights—some 10,000 men—and on Halleck's refusing, on the ground that Harper's Ferry was the key to the situation, he had replied that the key was of no use when the lock was broken, and asked that his resignation be accepted. This was promptly done—the authorities, possibly, not being sorry to get rid of another ill-starred commander—and to the surprise of many, who had expected Couch or Reynolds to succeed him, Meade was not only placed in command, but was given the troops which were refused Hooker. Meade, bearing to the eastward and keeping Washington and Baltimore covered, continued to march northward toward where Lee was throwing Pennsylvania into a panic. Extended as he was over nearly fifty miles in a hostile country, it behooved Lee to get his army together before he attacked or was attacked by an enemy which so largely outnumbered him, and he proceeded to do so.

Stuart meantime, acting in the discretion accorded him by Lee, had passed in the rear of Hooker and

crossed the Potomac at Seneca, barely a dozen miles from Washington, and had moved on northward between Hooker and Washington, capturing a great wagon-train at Rockville, cutting up the railway and telegraph, and drawing after him all the Federal cavalry available. His march was made with his usual swiftness, but as the Federal army was between him and the Confederate columns, he did not know where the main army was until the night of the 1st of July, when, having ridden around Gettysburg, he reached Carlisle on his way to the Susquehanna. That day Lee's army had fought the first day's battle of Gettysburg. Leaving Carlisle at once, Stuart rode for Gettysburg, where he arrived next afternoon.

While Stuart was riding around the Federal army, Lee was meeting the new situation presented to him by the unexpected proximity of Meade's army on his flank. On learning that Meade was so near, Lee promptly decided to concentrate his forces on the east of the mountains. Orders were issued immediately for his troops to turn and concentrate about Cashtown or Gettysburg. Ewell received the order at Carlisle as he was about to set out for Harrisburg, his instructions recalling him first to Chambersburg and then "to proceed to Cashtown or Gettysburg, as circumstances might dictate," and Hill was ordered to Cashtown, to the north-westward of Gettysburg, to which place a turnpike ran, with Longstreet following next day. Ewell immediately turned back; on the night of the 29th his trains were passing through Chambersburg, his three divisions moving on Gettys-

burg from the north. On the same day that Ewell arrived at Carlisle, the 27th, Longstreet and A. P. Hill reached the vicinity of Chambersburg. Up to this time no information had come from any source of the approach of the Federal army, and it was not until the night of the 28th that Lee was apprised by one of his scouts that the army had not only crossed the Potomac several days before but was now near South Mountain. A. P. Hill was, on the 29th, encamped on the road from Chambersburg to Gettysburg, and that day he moved Heth's Division from Fayetteville, where Anderson was left, to Cashtown, on the eastern side of the South Mountain, eight miles from Gettysburg, while Pender's Division followed to the western foot of the mountain.

On the morning of the 30th, Pettigrew's Brigade, of Heth's Division, was ordered to the little town of Gettysburg, a few miles southward, to get shoes and other supplies, of which it stood sorely in need, and found it occupied by the enemy, who were not known to be nearer than fifteen miles away. Pettigrew withdrew and bivouacked. The rest of Lee's army, on the night of the 30th, was placed as follows: Johnson's Division, of Ewell's Corps (four brigades—Jones's, Williams's, Walker's, and Stuart's), was near Fayetteville, on the Chambersburg Pike, seventeen miles north-west of Gettysburg; Early's Division, with four brigades (Gordon's, Hays's, Hoke's, and Smith's), was at East Berlin, on the York Pike, fifteen miles north-east of Gettysburg; Rodes's Division, five brigades (Daniels's, Ramseur's, Iverson's, O'Neal's, and

Doles's), was at Heidlersburg, ten miles north of Gettysburg. Of Hill's Corps, Heth's Division, three brigades (Archer's, Davis's, and Brockenborough's), was at Cashtown, eight miles north-west of Gettysburg; Pender's Division, four brigades (Thomas's, Lane's, Scales's, and McGowan's), was on the west side of the mountain, a few miles farther away, while Anderson's Division, beyond them, was at Fayetteville, seventeen miles from Gettysburg.

Longstreet, leaving Pickett's Division at Chambersburg to guard the rear, moved his other divisions (Hood's and McLaws's) on the 30th to Greenwood, fourteen miles north-west of Gettysburg, where Lee had his head-quarters, and "bivouacked about 2 P. M." Lee, at Greenwood, wrote on the 30th, ordering Imboden to take Pickett's place, so that the latter could move next day to Cashtown, where he proposed to establish his head-quarters. He had no new information as to the movements of the Federal army, and was sending out scouts to find Stuart. Stuart on the same day was riding northward from Westminster, Md., toward Hanover, Pa., on the way to Harrisburg.

On the day following (July 1), while Hill and Ewell were fighting the first day's battle about the town of Gettysburg, Longstreet's two divisions were moved forward, and they bivouacked that night on Willoughby Run, only three or four miles from the battle-field.

On the same day that Lee was moving southward toward Gettysburg, the 30th, Meade was moving northward along lines which would bring him nearer to Lee's route, and would at the same time cover

Washington and Baltimore. That day he established his head-quarters at Taneytown, Md., thirteen miles south of Gettysburg, having moved from Frederick, and set his engineers to work to reconnoitre and prepare defences for a pitched battle along the line of Pipe Creek, a few miles to the south of Taneytown. Reynolds, who commanded his left, consisting of the First, Third, and Eleventh Corps, with Buford's cavalry, was sent forward toward Gettysburg to find and draw Lee on to a battle on the ground which Meade had chosen along Pipe Creek. The Fifth Corps was moved toward Hanover, fourteen miles south-east of Gettysburg; the Twelfth Corps was pushed forward that night on the Baltimore Pike to within ten miles of Gettysburg; the Second Corps was at Queentown, and the Sixth Corps was at Manchester, thirty-four or thirty-five miles to the south-east, half way to Baltimore. On the evening of the 30th, Reynolds had pushed forward to Gettysburg, through which two of Buford's brigades of cavalry (Devin's and Gamble's) had passed to picket the roads from the north, while that night the First Corps bivouacked five miles south of the town, and the Third and Eleventh Corps bivouacked at Emmetsburg, ten miles south of the town.

It seems clear that while each side knew that the other was not far distant, and that a great battle was imminent, neither anticipated that the battle would be fought at Gettysburg.

The battle-field of Gettysburg lies in a piedmont region, in a fertile, rolling country of farms and hamlets, for the most part open, but interspersed with

woodland, divided by ridges running mainly north and south, with streams running between them, and in places broken by sharp though not high spurs, covered with boulders and clad with forest. The little town which gives its name to the battle lies on the slope at the northern end of one of these ridges, which rises somewhat abruptly at its back, and is crowned there by the cemetery from which it takes its name. This ridge throws out a curving spur to the eastward, known as Culp's Hill, around which runs Rock Creek, but the main backbone of the ridge extends south by south-west for some two miles, and after sinking in the middle, rises again, and ends in two sharp, wooded spurs which are known respectively as Little and Big Roundtop. The ground between the end of the eastern curve—Culp's Hill—and the southern portion of the ridge is much broken, but is traversed by roads which afford ready access from one to the other. On either side east and west of this ridge, at the distance of a mile or so, and divided from it by open valleys filled with farms and orchards, lie other ridges; that on the west was known as Seminary Ridge, from the Lutheran Seminary, which rose near its northern end.

On the morning of the 1st of July, the nearer troops to Gettysburg on both sides were set in motion for that place, while those farther away continued their general line of march, leading to the concentration about Gettysburg, which had been ordered. Hill, moving on Gettysburg from the westward, sent word of his movement to Ewell, who was some miles farther away, and who likewise set his troops in motion. Lee's orders

to his lieutenants were to confine any action which the meeting with the enemy might necessitate to a reconnoissance, and not bring on a general engagement. This was because of the dispersed condition of his own army and his ignorance of the disposition of the enemy. General Lee arrived at Cashtown on the morning of July 1, whence Heth had been sent that morning by Hill with orders to ascertain the force of the enemy; but if he found infantry in force to report the fact and not force an engagement. Meade's orders to his lieutenants were to fall back, if pressed, to the position which he had selected north of Emmetsburg, where he would probably be in a position to fight a defensive battle. As late as 12.30 on the 1st, his chief of staff wrote Buford, whose cavalry was then engaged beyond Gettysburg, to withdraw to Frizzelburg. At this time Hill had two divisions up, and the third not far in the rear, and Ewell was on his way.

Heth's Division, moving south-eastwardly along the Chambersburg Pike from Cashtown, eight miles away, toward nine o'clock came on Buford's pickets about a mile and a half from Gettysburg, and on these being driven in, encountered his dismounted cavalry, well posted on both sides of the road, on a commanding ridge to the west of the town. With Archer's Brigade on his right, and Davis's on his left, supported by Pegram's and McIntosh's Battalions, Heth pushed forward, crossed Willoughby Run, and passed up the slope, where to their surprise they were met by two brigades of the First Corps (Cutler's brigade and Meredith's "Iron Brigade") and were driven back with

heavy loss. Reynolds, moving to Gettysburg with Wadsworth's division, on hearing the firing, had ridden ahead, and, on finding that Hill was advancing, had sent word to Meade and hurried forward the First Corps to Buford's support. Conducting Wadsworth's division from the Emmetsburg Pike north-westward under cover of the woodland, he formed them on the ridge up which Heth was advancing. In a short time the remainder of the Federal First Corps, under Doubleday, had arrived on the ground, and when Archer, who had come under heavy fire from the crest above and obliqued to the right, penetrated the woodland in his advance, he found himself flanked and cut off by the Federal troops, and in retreating across the run was captured with a considerable portion of his brigade. Near the same wood Reynolds was killed about this time as he was placing his troops, and the command of the Federal force on the field devolved on Doubleday, until a little later, when Howard appeared a little in advance of the Eleventh Corps and took command. The fighting during these hours was hardly excelled during the war. Brigades were decimated; regiments on both sides were captured and recaptured.

The fight, though not so celebrated, was as fierce and deadly as on any of the succeeding days. On the Federal side, the Eleventh Corps came up to the assistance of the First, and Howard, who as ranking officer assumed command of the field, sent urgent messages to Slocum and to Sickles to hasten to his support. Each side fought with the most desperate valor. There were times when the opposing ranks delivered their

deadly volleys almost in each other's faces. Heth was nearly spent, when soon after two o'clock Rodes's Division, which on hearing the firing had been turned to the eastward and marched to the sound of the guns, came on the field deployed for action, and Hill, who appeared to be waiting for Ewell, now on his appearance sent Pender in. The fighting was renewed with redoubled fury; but in the nick of time Early came up on Rodes's left and gave a new impulse to the Confederate attack. Gordon, pushing forward against Barlow on the Federal right centre, and favored by a wide gap between Barlow and Schurz, carried the hill to the north-east of the town and drove Barlow's men back on the town. Barlow himself was left for dead on the field, but happily recovered to add later to his reputation as a gallant and able officer. His men were driven with great loss from the crest which they had held so stoutly, and were pushed down into and through the town.

The sweep of Pender's fresh troops added new fire to the Confederates, and rushing forward all along the front, they finally forced the Federal lines from their position, covering the town from north-east to south-west. The Eleventh Corps, driven down into the town, encountered there the rest of Early's Division, who had entered the town by the York Pike to the eastward, and, becoming a confused mass, were captured to the number of several thousand. The remainder of them retreated through and beyond the town to the heights above it, known as Cemetery Ridge, and were followed by Early's Division until the latter were re-

called by Ewell's command. The First Corps, which held on longer, was eventually forced back likewise, and was driven across the valley to the west of the town, still fighting as it retreated.

Lee had arrived on the scene about two o'clock, having heard the sound of battle while he was riding toward Cashtown. A message from Hill informed him of the situation, and Lee, having ordered Anderson forward from Cashtown, rode on with his staff—riding too hard for the corps commander with him. He arrived in time to see the enemy driven through the town. He appears to have been content with the way things had progressed, and about half-past two or three o'clock he sent Colonel Taylor, of his staff, to say to General Ewell that from where he was he could see "those people" retreating up the heights "without organization and in great confusion," that it was only necessary to press them to secure possession of the heights, and that, "if possible, he wished him to do this." Ewell, however, seems to have been personally spent, and to have thought that his men were equally so, and Lee's order had contained the proviso, "if possible." They had, indeed, been marching and fighting together for twelve hours; but had he called on them for a final effort, it seems beyond question that they would have swept on and carried the heights.

Hancock, who on the announcement of Reynolds's death had been sent forward by Meade to take over the command of the forces on the field, thought that the hill might have been captured by Ewell at that time had he pursued Howard's corps, but not after

he himself arrived and made his dispositions for defence. He says: "When I arrived upon the field, about 3 P. M., or between that and 3.30 P. M., I found the fighting about over; the rear of our troops were hurrying through the town, pursued by the Confederates. There had been an attempt to reform some of the Eleventh Corps as they passed over Cemetery Hill, but it had not been very successful. I presume there may have been 1,000 or 1,200 organized troops of that corps in position on the hill." In addition to these, Steinwehr's brigade alone occupied the heights.

Had Ewell not stopped the pursuit it is beyond question that Meade's army would have concentrated, as he had already ordered, along the Pipe Creek line.

General Ewell "deemed it unwise to make the pursuit," for fear, probably, as Taylor conjectures, of bringing on a general engagement. However this was, the pursuit was not pressed, though Gordon, who was in the full tide of victory, required three or four orders "of the most peremptory character" before he stayed his eager troops. Ewell not only halted his men and thus lost the golden opportunity presented of seizing the Ridge, whose possession two days later decided the issue of the battle and possibly that of the war, but he sent Johnson's Division around Culp's Hill, where it was isolated.

It was a stubborn and bloody conflict, with from 22,000 to 24,000 men on either side, and while it resulted in a clear victory for the Confederate troops, who not only swept the field but captured some 5,000 prisoners, including two generals, the loss on both sides was heavy. On the Confederate side the losses were

about 2,500, killed, wounded, and missing, and among them Heth and Scales had been wounded, and Archer had been captured. On the Union side the losses in killed and wounded were not less, and they had lost over 5,000 men captured, while Reynolds, the able commander of the First Corps, had been killed.

That night the Federals fortified the heights, and as during the ensuing hours new troops came pouring in by forced marches, the lines were rapidly strengthened with entrenchments. At the time, however, when Ewell halted, the commanding position of Culp's Hill was unoccupied. Hancock states that he ordered Wadsworth's division and a battery to take position there in the afternoon. But two of Ewell's staff officers reported to him that they were on the hill at dark. That night Lee held a conference in Gettysburg, at which were present Longstreet, Ewell, Hill, Rodes, Early, and Long, who has reported what occurred. "Longstreet gave it as his opinion that the best plan would be to turn Meade's left flank and force him back to the neighborhood of Pipeclay Creek. To this General Lee objected, and pronounced it impracticable under the circumstances." And later when Long, who had been directed to reconnoitre the Federal position on Cemetery Ridge, reported against a renewal of the attack that evening, he decided to make no further advance that evening, but to wait till morning to follow up his advantage. "He turned to Longstreet and Hill, who were present, and said: 'Gentlemen, we will attack the enemy in the morning as early as practicable.' In the conversation that succeeded, he directed them to make

the necessary preparations and be ready for prompt action the next day." Such is Long's account of this conference.[1]

On leaving the conference of the generals, General Lee informed General Pendleton, his chief of artillery, that he had ordered Longstreet to attack the enemy early next morning. This Longstreet has denied.[2] But it is certain that Lee expected him to do this, and there is, in addition to Lee's declaration at the meeting, the testimony of many officers[3] and the evidence of his own movements and demeanor the following morning. He was on the ground the following morning at daybreak, and all who saw him testify to his eager expectation of Longstreet's appearance and his impatience at his delay.[4] "Longstreet is so slow!" he exclaimed. At this hour only the Second Federal Corps, a division of the Twelfth and a division of the Third occupied the heights. Little Roundtop was not occupied, no guns were on the key to the field.

Meade, at Taneytown, Md., thirteen miles away, with the Second Corps, received Hancock's report of the situation that first afternoon and, issuing orders with a

[1] Long's "Memoir of Lee," p. 277.

[2] *Philadelphia Times*, Nov. 3, 1877.

[3] See reports of Generals Anderson and Wilcox; also General Early's statement: Southern Historical Society Papers, December, 1877, pp. 269, 285, 286. Lee's "Memoir of William N. Pendleton," p. 292.

[4] "Next morning," writes one of his officers, speaking of the second day, in which his battalion rendered signal service, "about 9 A. M., while reconnoitring that region south-west of Big Roundtop, I ran across General Lee, with two or three couriers, riding through the wood. He called me to him and asked: 'Have you seen General Longstreet or any of his troops anywhere in this neighborhood?' I answered that I had not. Then, getting a glimpse of a small body of men on foot moving along the edge of the woods, he despatched one of his couriers to learn

promptness which bore rich fruit, marched for the heights commanding the battle-field, where he arrived at one in the morning. There was discussion as to the availability of the position, and Meade at one time thought of withdrawing from it; but Hancock rode in person to urge the stand on this field. The Fifth Corps, that evening, was at Union Mills, twenty-three miles away, and the Sixth Corps was at Manchester, thirty-four to thirty-six miles away. Lee's army lay close to the battle-field, and might attack before his troops got up, or might interpose between him and Washington.[1]

Longstreet says he himself opposed further fighting there. Lee, however, was ready for the fight, and, relying on his officers and men, believed he could destroy Meade in detail. In the light of his failure some historians now criticise sharply his decision. Let us see. At daybreak Lee himself was ready and waiting for the battle to begin; but Longstreet, who the evening before had been averse to attacking, says he sought him out again at daybreak and renewed his views against making the attack on this side, an expostulation

who they were. He then asked me how far I had been toward the mountain, pointing toward Roundtop, and my object in being out there, etc., and then as soon as the courier returned, he asked: 'Are they Longstreet's men?' The answer was: 'They are not; but a small detachment returning to their command in the direction of Gettysburg.' Then, showing disappointment and impatience by his manner and tone, he said: 'I wonder where General Longstreet can be? . . .' This incident tends to confirm the belief, wellnigh universal among Confederates, that Longstreet was responsible for the loss of the battle." (Communicated to the writer by Colonel William T. Poague, from a manuscript prepared by him "for the information of his sons.")

[1] Meade to Halleck. Despatch, 2 P. M., July 2, 1863.

which caused Lee to send a staff officer to Ewell to ascertain whether, after examining the position by daylight, he could not attack. The position in front of Ewell was, however, now too strongly fortified to make an assault possible, and Meade, in contemplation of assuming the offensive, was massing his forces there. Lee even rode himself to confer with Ewell, but, finding what the situation was, adhered to his original decision and ordered Longstreet at eleven o'clock to attack as already directed.[1]

Even then, however, Longstreet held back, whether from obstinacy and refractoriness, or because "his heart was not in it" longer, or because he felt the situation hopeless—the two former of which reasons have been charged against him, and the last of which has been claimed by him—has ever been a question hotly debated. However it was, though his troops, except one brigade—Law's—were encamped close to the battle-field, he failed to move until half the day had been lost, because, as he said, he hated to go into battle with one boot off; and when he moved, Roundtop was fully protected. Meade had changed his plan of attacking with his right, and had strengthened his left; Sedgwick's corps, the Sixth, had come up after an epoch-making march of thirty-four miles since nine o'clock the night before, and was in position, while Longstreet sulked and dawdled with his eager troops awaiting orders on the edge of the battle-field.

Even as it was, in the furious battle which took

[1] Henderson's Review of Longstreet's "From Manassas to Appomattox." (*Journal of Royal United Service Inst.*, October, 1897.)

place that afternoon when Longstreet at last began to fight, Lee seized the elevation in front of his right, held it for some time, and passed beyond it, turned Sickles's left, and made a lodgement on Little Round-top, which Meade declared "the key-point of his whole position," and held it with his brave Alabamians until driven back by the Fifth Corps, massed for the purpose, and this, if held, would, Meade states, "have prevented him from holding any of the ground he subsequently held to the last."

Lee's plan is stated in his report. Longstreet was directed to make an attack upon the enemy's left. Ewell was to attack the high ground to his right, while Hill was to threaten the Federal centre to prevent the sending reinforcements to either wing.[1]

All night of the 1st Hancock's corps was marching for Gettysburg, where it arrived next morning about seven o'clock, and was posted along Cemetery Ridge. Two brigades of Birney's arrived that evening, and two brigades of Humphreys's next morning. The Fifth Corps marched twenty-three miles, and reached the ground about eight o'clock A. M., when it was posted on the Federal right above Rock Creek. The Sixth Corps marched thirty-four miles, from Manchester, arriving only on the afternoon of the 2d.

On the 2d, Longstreet's Corps, except Law's Brigade, reached the immediate vicinity of the battle-field early in the morning. Kershaw bivouacked two miles from Gettysburg the night before, and was ordered to move at four o'clock in the morning. McLaws had

[1] Lee's report. See Appendix C.

reached the field at nine o'clock, and Lee, in Longstreet's presence, personally pointed out to him on the map the road where he was to place his division. He reports that Lee rejected a suggestion of Longstreet's, and that the latter appeared irritated. From this time until after three o'clock, Lee was eagerly awaiting the movement by Longstreet which he had ordered, and which was to begin the battle. It was not, however, until four o'clock that Hood moved forward to the attack against Sickles's left, which was bent back toward Roundtop. McLaws, opposite Sickles's centre, posted on high ground formed by an outbranching elevation nearly a mile in advance of the Federal left, was still held back "awaiting Longstreet's orders." In a brief time the fighting was as furious as any that occurred on that deadly field. Hood, pushing in beyond Sickles's left, sent his right to seize first Big and then Little Roundtop, which up to this hour had not been occupied by the Federals. But at this juncture—only a few minutes before Hood's men (Law's Alabamians) reached the top of that rocky spur—the Federals appeared in force on the summit, and again the chance of victory was snatched from Lee. General Warren, who had been sent by Sickles a little while before to reconnoitre that part of the field, had ridden up Roundtop and caught sight of Hood's men moving forward on that position. Realizing the importance of the position, he had dashed back, and finding Vincent's brigade being pushed forward to Sickles's aid, he had turned and directed them up Little Roundtop, which they reached just in time to hold against

Law's Alabamians, who were clambering up the side. In the first shock the gallant Vincent was mortally wounded. Driven down the steep spur, Law's Brigade reformed at its foot, and, reinforced by Robertson's Texans and Bennings's Georgians, who had seized the Devil's Den and driven in Sickles's left, again charged up, driving Vincent's men back to the Top; but at this moment Federal reinforcements sent by Warren arrived, and Hood's men were once more driven down the steep, and Weed's brigade was sent with artillery to help hold what was now recognized as the key to the situation. "During all this time," says Alexander, "McLaws's Division was standing idle," though Barksdale was begging to be allowed to charge, and McLaws was awaiting Longstreet's order. Even when it was advanced it was in detachments, which sacrificed brigade after brigade. Kershaw, Semmes, Wofford, and Barksdale, Wilcox, Lang, and Wright fought brilliantly, but in turn rather than in concert, attacking Sickles along his left and centre. At length, Hood, on the extreme right, McLaws next to him, and Anderson, on the left, after furious fighting drove Sickles from the peach-orchard, across the wheat-field, and drove them finally, with terrific losses to both sides, to the high ground along Cemetery Ridge, christening the ground which Pickett was to make glorious next day.[1] The Fifth Corps, however, was now in position, and the Sixth Corps was arriving, and being put in to the north of Roundtop, was sent forward to support the hard-pressed Third Corps, which was being driven across

[1] Alexander's "Memoirs," pp. 394–403.

the wheat-field. Further to the Confederate left, while Anderson was supporting McLaws with Wilcox alone, while Mahone and Posey were held back, Hill attacked the Federal centre with but two brigades—Wright's Georgia Brigade and Perry's Florida Brigade under Lang. In a splendid charge across the open valley and up the bare slope under a withering fire of bullet, shot, and shell they advanced for over three-quarters of a mile, drove the enemy from their first line and carried the Ridge, capturing a number of the guns with which it was crowned. But here they found the enemy in a second line beyond their guns, and with their flanks exposed to a destructive fire of canister from either side, they were forced back with terrible losses, thus losing for want of support what Pickett vainly tried to capture next day. Wright declared that he could have held the Ridge had he been supported. None of these new troops on the Federal side were on the ground before five o'clock, and it cost 10,000 men to gain but a small part of what might have been seized with comparatively little cost had Lee's orders been carried out in the forenoon, when only the Second Corps and one division of the Third Corps were on the Ridge south of Cemetery Hill.

Ewell had waited all morning for the signal of Longstreet's and Hill's guns to begin his assault on the Federal right, on Cemetery Hill, and on the eastern spur of Culp's Hill, both of which were well fortified and defended with abundant artillery to protect them. Owing probably to the deadly fire from the batteries crowning the hills, Ewell's attack was delayed until

nearly sunset. Early was to attack Cemetery Hill with Hoke's and Hays's Brigades, and Edward Johnson, to his left, was to assault Culp's Hill. Under a withering fire Hays's Brigade carried Cemetery Ridge, but was forced back again by Hancock's reinforcement of the Eleventh Corps and the failure of his own supporting columns to come up on his right till he was driven back. It was not until after Early had been driven back with terrific losses that Johnson's Division, to the left, moved on the enemy's right on Culp's Hill. Johnson, after heavy fighting, carried the enemy's breastworks, which he held until next morning, when he was driven from them by the Twelfth Corps, reinforced by portions of the Fifth and Sixth Corps. The whole battle was without concert.

Yet Lee, at the close of the day, had made decided gains. He had driven Sickles from his chosen position to the ridge behind it; had effected a lodgement in the Devil's Den near the foot of the Roundtops, and on the enemy's right held their fortifications on Culp's Hill. He had suffered terribly himself, but had inflicted on them losses of 10,000 men, and he had received the reinforcement of Pickett's Division and of Stuart's Cavalry. Lee's own view was that "the result of the day's operation induced the belief that, with proper concert of action and with the increased support that the position gained on the right would enable the artillery to render the assaulting column," he had good grounds to count on success.[1] Accordingly, that night at a

[1] Lee's report. *Cf.* Fitzhugh Lee's "Life of Lee"; General Humphreys' "Gettysburg Campaign."

council of war he determined to continue the attack, and gave orders for the assault next morning.

Stuart having, as stated, crossed the Potomac to the eastward of Hooker, did not learn of the changed status of affairs, and of Lee's concentration of his army about Gettysburg, until he reached Carlisle, well to the north of Gettysburg, which he had passed around on his way toward the Susquehanna. He then turned and made for Gettysburg, where he arrived on the afternoon of the second day. It was said by men who were present when Stuart met Lee, that the latter exclaimed with more feeling than he usually allowed himself to manifest: "General Stuart, where have you been?" and when Stuart explained, and mentioned his capture of over two hundred wagons, that Lee exclaimed: "Two hundred wagons! General Stuart, what are two hundred wagons to this army!" Then, immediately recovering himself, the commanding-general proceeded to give his lieutenant orders as to the disposition of his force. This disposition sent him around the left to strike the enemy's rear, where he was engaged heavily with Gregg and Custer, without material results. On the 3d, to quote Lee's report, "the general plan was unchanged. Longstreet, reinforced by Pickett's three brigades, which arrived near the battle-field during the afternoon of the 2d, was ordered to attack the next morning, and General Ewell was directed to assault the enemy's right at the same time." [1]

But on the 3d, as before, the movement against the centre was delayed for hours, and when finally it was

[1] Lee's report.

carried out, there was again a failure of the support which alone could bring success. Johnson, isolated on the extreme left, was attacked at daylight and driven from the position he had captured the evening before, and after he had charged again and been repulsed with great loss, this ended the fighting for the day on that part of the field.

To the right the morning wore away and noon came and passed without the expected assault. Every hour was spent by Meade in strengthening his lines and preparing for the coming storm.

It was nearly two o'clock when the guns of the Confederate artillery, about 125 in number, along the Seminary Ridge, which were to begin the fight and prepare the way for the infantry to charge the Federal lines, entrenched on the Cemetery Ridge, nearly a mile away, opened fire on them. They were promptly replied to by the guns, about 100 in all, but of superior calibre and force, ranged along the Federal lines.

It is said that no such cannonading as this had ever been known on the continent. The Federal batteries presently slackened, as proved later, merely to substitute fresh battalions, and Alexander, in charge of Lee's advance artillery, sent an urgent message to Longstreet that his ammunition was nearly exhausted, and on Longstreet's saying that he had better replenish it, replied that there was none with which to replenish. Then finally Longstreet ordered his leading division forward, and in all the annals of war there is no more heroic record than that of that steady march across the open plain, with the Federal army posted on the

ridge above it raining death upon them from 100 guns and 50,000 muskets.

Lee says nothing of the hour set for the attack; but according to overwhelming authority it was to be made in the early morning by a column composed of McLaws's and Hood's Divisions, reinforced by Pickett's Brigades.[1] Ewell says "at daylight Friday morning, and that Johnson was engaged when he was informed that Longstreet would not be ready till ten."[2] But when Longstreet, hours later, unwillingly gave his order to Pickett to advance in the charge which has made Pickett's Division glorious, curiously enough McLaws and Hood were not sent forward in support, and these two fine divisions were left where they were awaiting orders, and the first knowledge they had was that the assault had been made and had failed.[3]

Heth's Division under Pettigrew—who commanded since Heth's disablement by a serious wound the day before—was formed in two lines on Pickett's left, with a space of several hundred yards between the two, and two brigades of Pender's Division, under Trimble, were formed in the rear and in supporting distance of Pettigrew. Wilcox's Brigade, from Anderson's Division, was ordered to move on Pickett's right flank as a protection to that flank. In all, about 14,000 or 15,000 men against 70,000, posted in one of the strongest positions found during the war. It was a tragic situation.

With ranks dressed on their colors and bands playing as if on parade, the gray line marched down the

[1] Lee's report. [2] Ewell's report.
[3] Longstreet's account of the battle.

slope, across the level, and then up the long slope before them, and all the while the gaps were being torn wider and wider in their ranks by the sleet of iron from a hundred guns, trained on them from front and flanks.

It transpired later that a part of the Confederate artillery had not done great damage, having failed to get the range. One battery of Nelson's Battalion, however (Milledge's), posted on a ridge to the northeast of Cemetery Hill, struck the range and did much execution with its rifled guns, enfilading the Eleventh Corps, till Nelson was ordered to withdraw.[1] No better description of what followed can be written than that contained in Colonel David Gregg McIntosh's "Review of the Gettysburg Campaign." The author was himself not only a "beholder," but one of the most gallant participants in that fatal battle.

"When Pickett and the other divisions emerged from cover and advanced to the open, they presented a thrilling spectacle, and one which no beholder can ever forget. The ranks were beautifully dressed, and the battle-flags told off the different commands. . . .

"As the lines advanced, and the batteries of the enemy again opened, and the gaps in the ranks began to grow wider and then to shrivel and shrink up beneath the deadly, withering fire of the infantry, and the stream of the wounded began to pour back in increasing volume, the hearts of those who were spectators were filled at first with a deep hush of expectancy, and then with a feeling of agonized despair, when the goal seemed to be reached and, hanging suspended a mo-

[1] Alexander's "Memoirs," pp. 418, 427.

ment, the tide rolled backward broken into fragments, and the brave fellows who a half hour before marched so valiantly up to the cannon's mouth, now lay prostrate on the green slopes, or else came limping back, battered and bleeding. There is no need for repetition of the details. The monuments on the ground attest the desperate valor with which each side fought."

As the broken ranks came back across the shot-ploughed plain, Lee advanced to meet them. "This is too bad! too bad!" he exclaimed. "It is all my fault." And then to the men as they passed him he said: "Go down to the stream and refresh yourselves." The next moment he was ordering up troops to meet any counterstroke which Meade might attempt. But Meade, like himself, was spent. Valor may be infinite, but endurance has its limitations.

The battle of Gettysburg has continued to be fought over from that day to the present, and will doubtless continue to be fought over for many years to come. To one, however, who has endeavored to study carefully and dispassionately both sides of the controversy which has grown out of this battle, it appears that Lee had good reason to believe that he would win it; that he ought to have won it on the first day, and on the second, even against Meade's masterly generalship; but that on the third day his chances were incalculably diminished. Whatever may be thought as to this, the opinion of the future is likely to be that on the part of Lee's corps commanders it was the worst-fought battle of the war. With a plan that gave every promise of success, and that ought to have succeeded—with

valor never surpassed on any field, valor on both sides so heroic and so splendid as to be almost incredible—the corps commanders, not once, but again and again, by their failure to carry out the plan of their chief in the spirit in which it was conceived, threw away every chance of victory and left the honors of all but valor to the Union general.

It used to be common soon after the war for old Confederate officers to declare that Longstreet should have been shot immediately after the battle, and that Napoleon would certainly have done so. But Lee was cast in a different mould. Of all his army he possibly knew most fully how absolutely Longstreet had frustrated his plans, and certainly of all he treated him with most leniency. No hint of his subordinate's failure or delay appears in his report, and to the day of his death he wrote his old lieutenant letters full of warm regard. But while he was assuming the burden of the responsibility and wrote Longstreet the affectionate letters of an old brother-in-arms who knew his worth, and overlooked his errors, Longstreet, with what was not far from sheer ingratitude, was placing on Lee the blame for his own shortcomings, and was arrogantly claiming that had he been allowed to dictate the plan of the campaign, the result would have been success.

Longstreet's fatal delay has been attributed to the time it required to find and follow a route to Sickles's left flank without being observed. General E. P. Alexander, his chief of artillery, admits his unaccountable slowness. But a better reason may be found in his own account of his action. After General Lee was in

his honored grave, Longstreet published his own defence, in which, evidently angered by Lee's reported speech that Longstreet was "so slow," he undertook to prove that Lee had made eleven grave errors in the precipitation and conduct of the battle of Gettysburg. He says that he opposed fighting the battle of Gettysburg, and that when he, on the evening of the 1st, gave his opinion to General Lee that they could not have called the enemy to a position better suited to their plans, and that all they had to do was to file around his left and secure good ground between him and his capital, he was astonished at Lee's impatience and his vehement declaration: "If he is there to-morrow I will attack him," and thereupon he observes: "His desperate mood was painfully evident and gave rise to serious apprehensions." All of which was written long afterward and as a defence against the quite general and serious criticism of his own conduct as the cause of Lee's failure.

But why, it has been asked, should Lee have been in a desperate mood? He had an army on which he knew he could count to do anything if they were properly led. He had gone into the North to fight; he had just seen a part of his force roll two fine army corps, fighting furiously, back through the town and over the heights, in confusion, leaving in his hands 5,000 captives, and he knew that the bulk of the Federal army was from four to nine times as far from the field as his own corps. His reason for fighting next morning was, therefore, not his desperation, but his apparently well-grounded hope that he should win

a battle before Meade could concentrate, and then be in a position to force terms. His position has commended itself to clear-headed soldiers since,[1] and the criticism of it is retroactive and based on events which should not, and in all human probability would not, have occurred but for Longstreet's slowness if not his bull-headedness.

Lee, as he waited on the morning of the 2d for Longstreet to move forward, gave Hood, who had been on the ground since daybreak, his chief reason for fighting. "The enemy is here," he said, "and if we don't whip him he will whip us." It was a sound reason and has been approved by good critics, and had Longstreet not dallied or sulked for more than half the day it might have been justified before dark fell on the night of the 2d of July. With Meade's army concentrated in his front, Lee could not retire through the passes of the South Mountain, and he could not manœuvre without abandoning his lines of communication; for without his cavalry he could get no supplies. As we see Longstreet fooling away the hours while spade and shovel rang along the green crest piling up the earthworks, and while Sedgwick's Sixth Corps, hot-footed, pushed along the dusty roads telling off the long miles hour after hour, we may well understand how different would have been the result had but Stonewall Jackson commanded that day the bronzed and eager divisions lying all morning with stacked arms awaiting orders. Doubt-

[1] Lieutenant-Colonel G. F. R. Henderson's Review of Longstreet's "From Manassas to Appomattox." (*Journal of Royal United Service Inst.*, October, 1897.)

less it was this that was in Lee's mind when, long afterward, he said: "If I had had Jackson at Gettysburg, as far as human reason can see, I should have won a great victory."

On July 3, when Lee assaulted he was repulsed in what is known to soldiers as the third day's battle; but his defeat was accomplished in the first half of the preceding day, when Longstreet failed to carry out his orders and the golden opportunity was lost.

To show that on this third day it was Longstreet's slowness which destroyed finally all possibility of success, cannot be better done than by quoting from the illuminating review of his book by Lieutenant-Colonel, afterward Brigadier-General, G. F. R. Henderson, already so closely followed.

"His conduct on the third day," declares this critic, "opens up a still graver issue. The First Army Corps when at length, on the afternoon of July 2, it was permitted to attack had achieved a distinct success. The enemy was driven back to his main position with enormous loss. On the morning of July 3, Lee determined to assault that position, in front and flank, simultaneously, and, according to his chief of the staff, Longstreet's Corps was to make the main attack on the centre, while the Second Corps attacked the right. But again there was delay, and this time it was fatal. . . . We may note that according to Longstreet's own testimony the order [to attack] was given soon after sunrise, and yet, although the Second Corps attacking the Federal right became engaged at daylight, it was not until 1 P. M., eight hours later, that the artillery of

the First Corps opened fire, and not till 2 P. M. that the infantry advanced. Their assault was absolutely isolated. The Second Corps had already been beaten back. The Third Corps, although a division who were ready to move to any point to which Longstreet might indicate, was not called upon for assistance. Two divisions of his own corps, posted on the right flank, did absolutely nothing, and after a supremely gallant effort the 15,000 men who were hurled against the front of the Federal army, and some of whom actually penetrated the position, were repulsed with fearful slaughter."

After discussing in detail Longstreet's tactics and action, this thoughtful critic adds: "But the crucial question is this: *Why did he delay his attack for eight hours,* during which time the Second Corps with which he was to co-operate was heavily engaged? If he moved only under compulsion, if he deliberately forbore to use his best efforts to carry out Lee's design, and to compel him to adopt his own, the case is very different. That he did so seems perfectly clear." "If Lee was to blame at all in the Gettysburg campaign," adds Henderson, "it was in taking as his second in command a general who was so completely indifferent to the claim of discipline."

Had Lee's orders been obeyed, he would probably have won the battle of Gettysburg. He must have won it on the 2d of July, when he had "a fine opportunity of dealing with the enemy in detail"; he might have won it even on the 3d, though his chances of doing so were greatly diminished. But fate, that decides the

issues of nations, decreed otherwise. The crown of Cemetery Ridge, seized and held for twenty minutes by that devoted band of gray-clad heroes, marks the highest tide, not of Confederate valor, but of Confederate hope. Even so, it appeared at first but a drawn battle. The Army of Northern Virginia had struck Meade so terrible a blow that, as Halleck testified before the commission on the conduct of the war, a council of war was held on the night of the 4th to decide whether they should retreat. At this council Meade asked his corps commanders three momentous questions: First, "Shall the army remain here?" Second, "If we remain here, shall we assume the offensive?" And then, third, "By what route shall we follow Lee?" The majority of voices were for remaining there; but unanimously they were against assuming the offensive. All that day the two armies lay on the opposite hills like spent lions nursing their wounds, neither of them able to attack the other. Next day Lee, with ammunition-chests nearly exhausted, fell slowly back to the Potomac, cautiously followed by his antagonist, and after waiting quietly for its swollen waters to subside, recrossed into Virginia. It was a defeat, for Lee had failed of his purpose. But it was a defeat which barely touches his fame as a captain. No other captain or army in history might have done more. No other ever conducted a more masterly retreat when the fight ended in failure.

It was possibly apparent to most trained soldiers when the remnants of the gray line that had climbed the long slopes of Gettysburg under the deadly sleet

that poured down on them, came back, that the battle was lost, and the Southern cause had received a staggering shock. None could have known it so well as Lee, and later he wrote his wife that she must not place too much reliance on the newspaper accounts of the Southern success. But he gave no sign of defeat. When young Colonel Pendleton, who had been Jackson's adjutant-general, and was still adjutant-general of the Second Corps, took him, on the 4th, the casualty list of his corps, and thinking to be encouraging, remarked that he hoped that the other two corps were in as good condition for work as the Second was that morning, Lee looked at him steadily and said coldly: "What reason have you, young gentleman, to suppose that they are not?"

During the 4th he had begun to send back his trains, his wounded and his prisoners, under a cavalry escort, taking the direct road for Williamsport by Fairfield, and on the night of the 4th he began to withdraw his army. Owing, however, to the storm and the condition of the roads, it was not till the afternoon of the 5th that Ewell's command, composing his rear guard, left his position in front of Meade. Next day Meade, urged on from Washington, began his pursuit, if that could be termed a pursuit, which took a roundabout course by Frederick and Middletown, and did not bring him to the Potomac until Lee had been waiting there for six days. Within sixty hours, Lee was at Hagerstown, posted to receive any assault which Meade might deliver. Then, as the assault was not made, he moved on. On the 13th he was at Williamsport, where, finding the river in flood, he took a position, which he forti-

fied in such a manner as to cover his position all the way to Falling Waters, and again prepared for battle, and awaited Meade's attack. Then, to quote his own words, as the river was likely to rise higher, and Meade "exhibited an intention of fortifying so as to hold a small force in our front, while they operated elsewhere," Lee concluded to recross to the Virginia side. This he accomplished on the afternoon and night of Monday, the 13th, and the morning of Tuesday, the 14th.[1]

As Lee lay near Williamsport, waiting for the Potomac River to subside, he gave an exhibition of his constancy. He heard here of the capture by Kilpatrick, in a raid, of his son, General W. H. F. Lee, who had been seriously wounded, and was ill at the home of his wife's uncle, Mr. William F. Wickham, in Hanover County. "I have heard with great grief," he writes his wife, "that Fitzhugh has been captured by the enemy. Had not expected that he would have been taken from his bed and carried off, but we must bear this additional affliction with fortitude and resignation and not repine at the will of God. It will eventuate in some good that we know not of now. We must all bear our labors and hardships manfully. Our noble men are cheerful and confident. I constantly remember you in my thoughts and prayers."

To Mr. Davis he writes, on the 8th, of his army: "Though reduced in numbers by the hardships and battles through which it has passed since leaving the Rappahannock, its condition is good, and its confidence

[1] "Memoirs of William Nelson Pendleton, D.D.," pp. 295, 296. E. P. Alexander's "Memoirs," p. 441.

is unimpaired. I hope your Excellency will understand that I am not in the least discouraged, or that my faith in the protection of an all-merciful Providence, or in the fortitude of this army, is at all shaken."

When was that constant soul ever shaken! God had established it beyond the power of adversity to touch, much less to shake, it. On July 12, lying between Meade's great army and the swollen river, he writes his wife: "You will learn before this reaches you, that our success at Gettysburg was not so great as reported. In fact, that we failed to drive the enemy from his position, and that our army withdrew to the Potomac. Had the river not unexpectedly risen, all would have been well with us; but God in His all-wise providence willed otherwise, and our communications have been interrupted and almost cut off. The waters have subsided to about four feet, and if they continue, by to-morrow I hope our communications will be open. I trust that a merciful God, our only hope and refuge, will not desert us in this hour of need, and will deliver us by His almighty hand, that the whole world may recognize His power, and all hearts be lifted up in adoration and praise of His unbounded loving-kindness. We must, however, submit to His almighty will, whatever that may be. May God guide and protect us all is my constant prayer."

Surely no defeated general, with his army lying where, humanly speaking, every chance was against them, ever exhibited a humbler heart to God or presented a more constant front to his enemy. Meade, though heavily reinforced, could not see his way clear

to assault a foe so bold and perilous even in retreat, and called a council of war, at which the decision reached was not to attack. And, indeed, Lee's position was almost impregnable.[1] The insistence of the government in Washington, however, was so great, and Halleck's despatch to Meade was so close akin to a censure, that he instantly requested to be relieved, which drew from Halleck something like an apology. The next day, spurred on by the reflection of his superiors in Washington, he made his dispositions to attack; but the day before Lee had begun to cross the river, and by one o'clock on the 14th his rear guard, composed of Hill's command, was over, leaving to the enemy, as the spoils of the rear-guard battle fought by Hill's Division, 2 guns, a number of wagons abandoned for want of horses, and some 500 men, including stragglers from various commands, "overcome by previous labors and hardships, and fatigues of a most trying night." Such was Lee's account.

Before leaving the subject of Gettysburg, it may prove illuminating, even at the cost of some repetition, to know what Lee himself said on the subject of this campaign. His formal statement is contained in his report to his government, nearly a month later.[2] He gives in outline not only his movements, but his reasons, and in them we have the picture of the man. No word of censure appears. It is a simple and lucid statement of the essential facts, and testifies to a serene and constant mind. The responsibility he assumed fully and

[1] Humphreys' "Gettysburg Campaign."
[2] See Appendix C.

unequivocally. His reference to Longstreet conveys a commendation, in that he linked his name with the capture of "the desired ground" on the second day.[1]

On his return to Virginia, Lee wrote to his wife letters which gave his views on the situation:

BUNKER HILL, VA., *July 15th.*

The army has returned to Virginia. Its return is rather sooner than I had originally contemplated, but having accomplished much of what I proposed on leaving the Rappahannock—namely, relieving the valley of the presence of the enemy and drawing his army north of the Potomac—I determined to recross the latter river. The enemy, after concentrating his forces in our front, began to fortify himself in his position, and bring up his troops, militia, etc., and those around Washington and Alexandria. This gave him enormous odds. It also circumscribed our limits for procuring subsistence for men and animals, which, with the uncertain state of the river, rendered it hazardous for us to continue on the north side. It has been raining a great deal since we first crossed the Potomac, making the roads horrid and embarrassing our operations. The night we recrossed it rained terribly; yet we got all over safe, save such vehicles as broke down on the road from the mud, rocks, etc. We are all well. I hope we will yet be able to damage our adversaries when they meet us, and that all will go right with us. That it should be so we must implore the forgiveness of God for our sins and the continuance of His blessings. There is nothing but His almighty power that can sustain us. God bless you all.

[1] See Appendix C.

Camp Culpeper, Va., *July* 26, 1863.

After crossing the Potomac, finding that the Shenandoah was six feet above fording stage, and having waited a week for it to fall so that I might cross into Loudoun, fearing that the enemy might take advantage of our position and move upon Richmond, I determined to ascend the valley and cross into Culpeper. Two corps are here with me. The third passed Thornton's Gap, and, I hope, will be in striking distance to-morrow. The army has labored hard, endured much, and behaved nobly. It has accomplished all that could be reasonably expected. It ought not to have been expected to perform impossibilities or to have fulfilled the anticipations of the thoughtless and unreasonable.

The numbers of the respective armies on the field were: Meade's troops, 105,000; Lee's troops, 62,000. The losses during the three days were: Meade's losses, 23,000—killed, wounded, and missing; Lee's losses, 20,500—killed, wounded, and missing. In the Army of the Potomac 4 general officers were killed and 13 were wounded. In the Army of Northern Virginia 5 general officers were killed and 9 were wounded. It is a roll of honor.

Three or four cardinal mistakes united to cause Lee's defeat at Gettysburg. The first was Stuart's failure to keep him apprised of Hooker's movements, by which he ran into the Federal army in a situation where he had either to fight and whip it or be whipped by it. The second was Ewell's failure to pursue the advantage he had gained on the afternoon of the 1st and seize Cemetery Ridge, instead of halting his troops below it and giving Meade time to occupy and fortify it. The

third was Longstreet's failure to attack, on the morning of the 2d, before Meade's whole army was up. And the fourth was Longstreet's failure to carry out his orders and attack in concert on the morning of the 3d, instead of throwing away the entire forenoon and then sending Pickett and Heth alone up the long open slopes of Gettysburg, with the whole Federal army to play on them as they advanced.

Had Stuart operated between Lee and Hooker's army, as he was expected to do, Lee might have chosen his own battle-ground and have awaited attack as he did at Sharpsburg. The absence of Stuart on his raid Steele thinks possibly cost Lee a victory. But even after Gettysburg had become the battle-ground, Lee's plan was sound enough had his corps commanders not hesitated and delayed the execution of their respective parts. Valor could do no more than was done. On both sides it reached its high tide of self-devotion and immolation. But the intelligence which should have directed this valor on the Southern side suddenly fell into abeyance, and the opportunities which Fortune offered were allowed to pass unheeded with the passing hours. Indeed, the judgment of the future is likely to be, that while on the Northern side the corps commanders made amends for lack of plan and saved the day by their admirable co-operation, on the Southern side the plan of the commanding general was defeated by the failure of the corps commanders to act promptly and in concert. Lee's declaration that had he had Jackson at Gettysburg, he would, so far as man could see, have won the battle, is to this effect. The prompt and high-

minded Meade was a little later superseded by his government in favor of the victorious Grant, and loyally served under him as commander of the Army of the Potomac to the end. His government thought he should have destroyed Lee's army. The truth is that Lee's army was indestructible by any force that Meade could have brought against it. But, at the South, neither Lee nor his heroic army ever stood higher with the authorities or the Southern people. His very defeat seems even now but the pedestal for a more exalted heroism. With a magnanimity too sublime for common men wholly to appreciate, he took all the blame for the failure on himself. History has traversed his unselfish statement, and has placed the blame where it justly belongs: on those who failed to carry out the plan his daring genius had conceived.

Moved possibly by the criticism of the opposition press, for there was ever a hostile and intractable press attacking the government of the Confederacy and reviling all its works, Lee a little later wrote to Mr. Davis and proposed that he should be relieved by some younger and possibly more efficient man. His bodily strength was failing, he said, and he was dependent on the eyes of others. Mr. Davis promptly reassured him in a letter which goes far to explain the personal loyalty to him, not only of Lee, but of the South.

These letters give a picture of the two men in their relation to each other, and to the cause they represented, and should be read in full by all who would understand the character of the two leaders of the Confederacy.

Lee's letter was as follows:

CAMP ORANGE, *August* 8, 1863.

MR. PRESIDENT:

Your letters of the 28th of July and 2d of August have been received, and I have waited for a leisure hour to reply, but I fear that will never come. I am extremely obliged to you for the attention given to the wants of this army and the efforts made to supply them. Our absentees are returning, and I hope the earnest and beautiful appeal made to the country in your proclamation may stir up the whole people, and that they may see their duty and perform it. Nothing is wanted but that their fortitude should equal their bravery to insure the success of our cause. We must expect reverses, even defeats. They are sent to teach us wisdom and prudence, to call forth greater energies, and to prevent our falling into greater disasters. Our people have only to be true and united, to bear manfully the misfortunes incident to war, and all will come right in the end. I know how prone we are to censure, and how ready to blame others for the non-fulfilment of our expectations. This is unbecoming in a generous people, and I grieve at its expression. The general remedy for the want of success in a military commander is his removal. This is natural, and in many instances proper; for no matter what may be the ability of the officer, if he loses the confidence of his troops, disaster must sooner or later ensue.

I have been prompted by these reflections more than once since my return from Pennsylvania to propose to your Excellency the propriety of selecting another commander for this army. I have seen and heard of expressions of discontent in the public journals as the result of the expedition. I do not know how far this feeling extends to the army. My brother officers have

been too kind to report it, and so far the troops have been too generous to exhibit it. It is fair, however, to suppose that it does exist, and success is so necessary to us that nothing should be left undone to secure it. I, therefore, in all sincerity, request your Excellency to take measures to supply my place. I do this with the more earnestness because no one is more aware than myself of my inability to discharge the duties of my position. I cannot even accomplish what I myself desire. How can I fulfil the expectations of others? In addition, I sensibly feel the growing failure of my bodily strength. I have not yet recovered from the attack I experienced the past spring. I am becoming more and more incapable of exertion, and am thus prevented from making the personal examination and giving the supervision to the operations in the field which I feel to be necessary. I am so dull that, in undertaking to use the eyes of others, I am frequently misled.

Everything, therefore, points to the advantage to be derived from a new commander, and I the more anxiously urge the matter upon your Excellency from my belief that a younger and abler man than myself can be readily obtained. I know that he will have as gallant and brave an army as ever existed to second his efforts, and it would be the happiest day of my life to see at its head a worthy leader—one that would accomplish more than I can perform, and all that I have wished. I hope your Excellency will attribute my request to the true reason—the desire to serve my country and to do all in my power to insure the success of her righteous cause.

I have no complaints to make of any one but myself. I have received nothing but kindness from those above me, and the most considerate attention from my comrades and companions in arms. To your Excellency I am specially indebted for uniform kindness

and consideration. You have done everything in your power to aid me in the work committed to my charge, without omitting anything to promote the general welfare. I pray that your efforts may at length be crowned with success, and that you may long live to enjoy the thanks of a grateful people.

With sentiments of great esteem, I am,

Very respectfully and truly yours,

R. E. Lee, *General.*

His Excellency, Jefferson Davis, *President Confederate States.*

To this letter President Davis sent the following reply:

Richmond, Va., *August* 11, 1863.

General R. E. Lee,

*Commanding Army of Northern Virginia.*

Yours of the 8th inst. has just been received. I am glad that you concur so entirely with me as to the wants of our country in this trying hour, and am happy to add that after the first depression consequent upon our disasters in the West, indications have appeared that our people will exhibit that fortitude which we agree in believing is alone needed to secure ultimate success.

It well became Sidney Johnston when overwhelmed by a senseless clamor to admit the rule that success is the test of merit; and yet there has been nothing which I have found to require a greater effort of patience than to bear the criticisms of the ignorant who pronounce everything a failure which does not equal their expectations or desires, and can see no good result which is not in the line of their own imaginings.

I admit the propriety of your conclusions that an

officer who loses the confidence of his troops should have his position changed, whatever may be his ability; but when I read the sentence I was not at all prepared for the application you were about to make. Expressions of discontent in the public journals furnish but little evidence of the sentiment of the army. I wish it were otherwise, even though all the abuse of myself should be accepted as the results of honest observation. Were you capable of stooping to it, you could easily surround yourself with those who would fill the press with your laudations, and seek to exalt you for what you had not done, rather than detract from the achievements which will make you and your army the subject of history and the object of the world's admiration for generations to come.

I am truly sorry to know that you still feel the effects of the illness you suffered last spring, and can readily understand the embarrassments you experience in using the eyes of others, having been so much accustomed to make your own reconnoissances. Practice will, however, do much to relieve that embarrassment, and the minute knowledge of the country which you have acquired will render you less dependent for topographical information.

But suppose, my dear friend, that I were to admit, with all their implications, the points which you present, where am I to find the new commander who is to possess the greater ability which you believe to be required? I do not doubt the readiness with which you would give way to one who could accomplish all that you have wished, and you will do me the justice to believe that if Providence should kindly offer such a person for our use I would not hesitate to avail myself of his services.

My sight is not sufficiently penetrating to discover such hidden merit, if it exists, and I have but used to

you the language of sober earnestness when I have impressed upon you the propriety of avoiding all unnecessary exposure to danger, because I felt our country could not bear to lose you. To ask me to substitute for you some one, in my judgment, more fit to command or who would possess more of the confidence of the army, or of the reflecting men of the country, is to demand an impossibility. It only remains for me to hope that you will take all possible care of yourself, that your health and strength will be entirely restored, and that the Lord will preserve you for the important duties devolved upon you in the struggle of our suffering country for the independence which we have engaged in war to maintain.

As ever,

Very respectfully and truly,

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

With these letters to portray the character of Lee, history will endorse with its infallible pen what the President of the Confederacy wrote: There was no better man to take his place.

Though Lee failed of final success, to the student of history who weighs opportunities and compares resources, this in nowise mars his fame. With ammunition almost exhausted, he lay in the face of the enemy twenty-four hours, and then, with Meade's great army pressing him, urged on by the now eager government and people of the Union, he marched slowly to the Potomac, which was in flood, and after lying ten days in the face of his antagonist, with the swollen Potomac at his back, brought off his army intact and undis-

spirited, together with 4,000 prisoners, and having recrossed the Potomac on the 13th and 14th, and moved back to his old ground about Culpeper, he proceeded to prepare for the next campaign.

The chief disaster of Gettysburg lay not so much in the first repulse of the intrepid lines, which, in the face of a constantly increasing storm of shot and shell, swept across that deadly plain and on up the flaming slopes of Cemetery Ridge and Little Roundtop, as in the consequences which were soon disclosed.

## CHAPTER XIV

### AUTUMN OF 1863

On finding that Lee had succeeded in crossing the Potomac, Gregg's cavalry undertook to cross the river; but two of Stuart's Brigades fell on him and drove him back to his own side with heavy loss. Lee having, a little later, moved up the valley of the Shenandoah, with a view of crossing the Blue Ridge into Loudoun, not only found the Shenandoah too high for fording, but that Meade, who had crossed the Potomac lower down, had seized and fortified the passes of the Blue Ridge. He accordingly marched on and crossed over by way of Chester Gap into Culpeper, where he posted himself on the Rapidan to prevent Meade's marching on Richmond, which was now uncovered.

Meade was now by reason of his magnitude and the spirit of his troops formidable enough to require careful watching. It has been frequently remarked that Lee after Gettysburg made no further attempt to invade the country of the enemy. The fact is correct, but the reason given for it is mainly erroneous. The true reason was that his army had no shoes nor clothes. It was said by Napoleon that an army marches on its belly; and it has been said with equal truth that while it can fight without shoes, it cannot march without them. Shoes were now more difficult to get in the

Confederacy than guns. The need of clothes and shoes precipitated the battle of Gettysburg. The same want now effected what Meade with his great and gallant army could not have done—it held Lee within a circumscribed field of operations. He could no longer lead his eager veterans to distant fields and exercise his masterly strategy. The South-west was almost as completely cut off by the capture of Vicksburg and the opening of the Mississippi as was Canada, and what the opened Mississippi failed to accomplish in this respect, the steadily dwindling lines to the south completed. The South was, indeed, entering on its final period of exhaustion.

Lee, having marched around Meade to Culpeper, now established his army in the well-known region among the head-waters of the Rappahannock and Rapidan, where his position was convenient for covering the railroad at the same time that he could observe Meade and be ready to take advantage of any misstep he might make. Here he spent the remainder of the summer endeavoring to get his army refitted with shoes and clothing necessary to resume the offensive. Another reason for his remaining inactive during this period was that owing to the exigency in the South-west, where affairs were not going well, Longstreet was detached and sent out to Tennessee with two of his divisions, those of McLaws and Hood, to reinforce Bragg and defeat Rosecrans at Chickamauga, while Pickett's Division was detached for service below Petersburg, where Richmond was threatened from Norfolk and Suffolk. Longstreet was urgent to go,

and when Lee, from Richmond, where he had been summoned by Mr. Davis for consultation, wrote him in August, urging him to "use every exertion to prepare the army for offensive operations," so as to bring General Meade out in the open field and crush his army, Longstreet wrote combating Lee's suggestions, and gave his opinion that the "best opportunity for great results is in Tennessee."

As the summer passed and Meade learned of the diminution of Lee's forces by the detachment of Longstreet, who had been sent to Tennessee, he began to conceive hopes of being able to force him back on Richmond. On September 4, Lee wrote his wife from camp, near Orange Court House: "You see I am still here. When I last wrote, the indications were that the enemy would move against us any day; but this past week he has been very quiet, and seems at present to continue so. I was out looking at him yesterday from Clark's Mountain. He has spread himself over a large surface and looks immense; but I hope will not prove as formidable as he looks." Lee was now on the alert to bar Meade's way, whichever direction he might take, and after waiting three weeks for Meade to take the steps he had apparently been contemplating, Lee followed his natural instinct and assumed the offensive. On October 9, leaving a force of cavalry and infantry to guard his old position, he began a flank movement around Meade's right, which was substantially a repetition of the manœuvre that had hurried Pope across the Rappahannock over a year before. Like Pope, Meade hastily withdrew to the north of the Rap-

pahannock. Then learning nothing definite of Lee's movements he retraced his steps and again crossed the Rappahannock and reoccupied Culpeper, leaving a corps at the crossings of the Rappahannock. Here he was informed that Lee, ignoring his manœuvres, had on the 12th forced a crossing of the Rappahannock at White Sulphur Springs, and having driven Gregg off, was marching northward. Meade was a master at moving his troops, and now, making a forced march that night, he was in Lee's rear next morning. Lee being out of rations, was forced to wait at Warrenton all of the 13th, and this delay enabled Meade to pass by him. On the morning of the 14th Lee sent Ewell and A. P. Hill to Bristoe Station, hoping to make an effective attack on Meade's rear, but "some one blundered." Warren, being attacked by two of Hill's Divisions, occupied a railway cut, and in the fight which ensued cut off and captured 5 guns, 2 stands of colors, and some 450 prisoners, and then marched on after Meade, who now concentrated at Centreville and awaited Lee's attack. Men groaned at a defeat which should have been a victory but for an inexplicable blunder.[1] As, even had Meade's strongly fortified position been carried or turned, he could have fallen back on Alexandria, as Pope had done, Lee refrained from further attack and returned to his position on the Rappahannock. Meade promptly followed; but his cavalry under Kilpatrick was routed at Buckland, in a way to show that Stuart was not to be caught napping, and to furnish the Army of Northern Virginia

[1] S. P. Lee's "Life of William N. Pendleton."

with many a joke on the "Buckland Races." The affair at Bristoe Station marred what would otherwise have been a completely successful manœuvre.

Such a fiasco was an experience to which the Second Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia was little accustomed, and the loss of Jackson was felt anew by his old command. Lee now returned toward Culpeper, forced to abandon the offensive by the want of shoes in his army. Lee wrote his wife on the 19th of October: "I have returned to the Rappahannock. I did not pursue with the main army beyond Bristoe or Broad Run. Our advance went as far as Bull Run, where the enemy was entrenched, extending his right as far as Chantilly, in the yard of which he was building a redoubt. I could have thrown him farther back, but I saw no chance of bringing him to battle, and it would have only served to fatigue our troops by advancing farther. If they had been properly provided with clothes, I would certainly have endeavored to have thrown them north of the Potomac; but thousands were barefooted, thousands with fragments of shoes, and all without overcoats, blankets, or warm clothing. I could not bear to expose them to certain suffering on an uncertain issue."

On October 28 he wrote her a letter which threw a fine light on the situation of his army as regarded shoes and necessary clothing, and on his own simplicity of life. "I moved yesterday," he says, "into a nice pine thicket, and Perry is to-day engaged in constructing a chimney in front of my tent which will make it warm and comfortable. I have no idea when F. [his son.

Brigadier-General W. H. F. Lee] will be exchanged. The Federal authorities still resist all exchanges, because they think it is to our interest to make them. Any desire expressed on our part for the exchange of any individual magnifies the difficulty, as they at once think some great benefit is to result to us from it. His detention is very grievous to me, and, besides, I want his services. I am glad you have some socks for the army. Send them to me. They will come safely. Tell the girls to send all they can. I wish they could make some shoes, too. We have thousands of barefooted men. There is no news. General Meade, I believe, is repairing the railroad, and I presume will come on again. If I could only get some shoes and clothes for the men, I would save him the trouble."

The loss of Vicksburg had done more than the defeat at Gettysburg to overthrow the South. Thenceforth the South was cut in two.

On the 7th of November, Meade, finding Lee not disposed to attack him or repeat the manœuvre which had put Washington in a fright, and conscious of his own superiority in men and equipment, moved forward to the Rappahannock. His left, under French, crossed at Kelly's Ford; his right, under Sedgwick, came, about nightfall, on the Bridge Head, on the near side of the river, at Rappahannock Station, guarding the bridge, occupied by two of Early's Brigades. Making a dash for it, Russell's division rushed the pontoon bridge, surprised and captured the position, with 5 guns, 1,675 men, and 8 stands of colors, with little loss and before the Confederates on the south side of the river knew

that the point was being attacked. These "blunders on the part of some one" set the Second Corps to deploring afresh the loss of their old commander. "It makes me sick," wrote the young adjutant-general of the corps, who had been on Jackson's staff. It looked now as though Meade were preparing for a general attack, and with a view to drawing him on where he might renew his attack in a position where disparity of numbers would not count for so much, Lee, on the night of the 8th of November, withdrew to the western bank of the Rapidan, and there awaited him in the position he had occupied in October.

Finally, on the 26th of November, Meade, spurred on to attack Lee by the urgency of his government and the clamor of the press, moved southward and crossed the Rapidan at the lower fords below Lee's position, with the intention of manœuvring him out of his position and attacking him. Lee promptly "accepted the gage," and withdrawing his troops from his lines that night, by daylight next morning was on Meade's flank, prepared for any move he might make. With his cavalry in front to feel the enemy and ascertain his purpose, he moved his Second Corps under Early (Ewell being sick) to Locust Grove by the old Turnpike and the Raccoon Ford Road, and his Third Corps by the Plank Road. Skirmishing ensued for a time, and about four o'clock it developed into a sharp engagement in which the enemy were driven back from the position they had assumed. That night, learning that Meade was moving in the direction of Orange Court House, Lee, believing that he would now with-

out doubt attack him, withdrew his army to the west side of Mine Run and took a strong position on the heights above Mine Run, where he awaited Meade's attack for several days. But although Meade brought up his army, and apparently made every preparation for a general battle, on the morning of the 2d of December he had drawn back beyond the Rappahannock. Warren, to whom the conduct of the assault had been confided, had found Lee's position too strong to give promise of its being successfully assaulted, and the expected battle never came off. Two days later Lee wrote his wife as follows: "You will probably have seen that General Meade has retired to his old position on the Rappahannock without giving us battle. I had expected, from his movements and all that I had heard, that it was his intention to do so, and after the first day, when I thought it necessary to skirmish pretty sharply with him on both flanks to ascertain his views, I waited patiently his attack. On Tuesday, however, I thought he had changed his mind, and that night made preparations to move around his left next morning and attack him. But when day dawned he was nowhere to be seen. He had commenced to withdraw at dark Tuesday evening. We pursued to the Rapidan, but he was over. Owing to the nature of the ground, it was to our advantage to receive rather than to make the attack, and as he about doubled us in numbers, I wished to have that advantage. I am greatly disappointed at his getting off with so little damage, but we do not know what is best for us. I believe a kind God has ordered all things for our good."

After this the weather became so severe that further operations were impossible, and the armies went into winter quarters, Lee along the Virginia Central Railway and in the vicinity of Orange, Meade in the region about Culpeper. The inaction was, however, much in favor of the North; for the South was rapidly being depleted. Lee's army was in a state of such destitution that it is a wonder the men could be kept together. Only their spirit enabled them to stand the hardships of the winter. Barefooted and hungry, they stood it out through the long months of a Virginia winter, and when it is considered that until they joined the army many of these men had never seen snow, and that none of them had ever experienced want of adequate clothing, their resolution is a tribute to their patriotism which can never be excelled. That Lee himself endured hardships and suffered with them in their self-denial was sufficient for them. An incident of this period is related by Colonel Charles Marshall, General Lee's aide-de-camp. He says: "While the army was on the Rapidan, in the winter of 1863–64, it became necessary, as was often the case, to put the men on very short rations. Their duty was hard, not only on the outposts during the winter, but in the construction of roads, to facilitate communication between the different parts of the army. One day General Lee received a letter from a private soldier whose name I do not now remember, informing him of the work that he had to do, and stating that his rations were not sufficient to enable him to undergo the fatigue. He said, however, that if it was absolutely

necessary to put him upon such short allowance, he would make the best of it, but that he and his comrades wanted to know if General Lee was aware that his men were getting so little to eat, because if he was aware of it he was sure there must be some necessity for it. General Lee did not reply directly to the letter, but issued a general order in which he informed the soldiers of his efforts in their behalf, and that their privation was beyond his means of present relief, but assured them that he was making every effort to procure sufficient supplies. After that there was not a murmur in the army, and the hungry men went cheerfully to their hard work."

Lee's private letters to his family speak in their simplicity with an eloquence which no rhetoric could equal. From his camp he writes to his wife on January 24, 1864: "I have had to disperse the cavalry as much as possible to obtain forage for their horses, and it is that which causes trouble. Provisions for the men, too, are very scarce, and with very light diet and light clothing, I fear they suffer, but still they are cheerful and uncomplaining. I received a report from one division the other day, in which it was stated that over 400 men were barefooted and over 1,000 were without blankets."

His letters to his family continually refer to the socks they knitted for his men, and at times he brought and delivered these socks himself. As he lay during this winter confronting Meade's well-equipped army, while his own men, ragged and barefooted and hungry, shivered and danced by turns, his mien was as calm and

assured as though the conditions had been reversed. But he must have faced often the stern and tragic fact that his resources, as small as they were then, were steadily dwindling. Whatever the inward grip on his heart of this secret knowledge, which like a vulture was tearing his vitals, to the outer world he was all tranquillity. *Tranquillus in arduis* was the mark of his character.

In the necessary disposal of the cavalry to obtain forage, to which General Lee refers as above stated, the cavalry was stationed at Charlottesville, and General Lee's youngest son, who had been transferred the summer before to the cavalry, having sent him an invitation, received from him a reply, which shows how heavily the burden was weighing on his shoulders.

CAMP ORANGE COURT HOUSE,
*January* 17, 1864.

I enclose a letter for you which has been sent to my care. I hope you are well and all around you. Tell Fitz I grieve over the hardships and sufferings of his men in their late expedition. I would have preferred his waiting for more favorable weather. He accomplished much under the circumstances, but would have done more in better weather. I am afraid he was anxious to get back to the ball. This is a bad time for such things. We have too grave subjects on hand to engage in such trivial amusements. I would rather his officers should entertain themselves in fattening their horses, healing their men, and recruiting their regiments. There are too many Lees on the committee. I like them all to be present at battles, but can excuse them at balls. But the saying is:

"Children will be children!" I think he had better move his camp farther from Charlottesville, and perhaps he will get more work and less play. He and I are too old for such assemblies. I want him to write me how his men are, his horses, and what I can do to fill up his ranks.

At the end of the first week in February, in pursuance of a not very well-developed plan to hold Lee by a demonstration along the Rapidan while an advance was made on Richmond by way of the Peninsula, Sedgwick was moved forward as if to bring on a battle; but after a sharp skirmish, in which he lost over a thousand men, he retired to his original position, while below Richmond the movements proved equally futile. General Lee, writing of the affair, says (in a letter to Mrs. Lee, dated February 16, 1864): "This day last week we were prepared for battle, but I believe the advance of the enemy was only to see where we were and whether they could injure us. They place their entire loss in killed, wounded, and missing at 1,200, but I think that is exaggerated. Our old friend, Sedgwick, was in command."

At the end of February General Lee narrowly escaped capture at the hands of a cavalry force, under the command of Colonel Dahlgren, who, in a bold raid on Richmond, struck the Virginia Central Railroad a short time after General Lee passed by in a train. Other attempts having failed, a new method was attempted for the capture of Richmond. Knowing that the city was almost totally unprotected on the south side and contained only local guards, it was conceived

that it might be seized by a bold dash made by a picked body of cavalry, who should ride around Lee's flank, and, striking across country, should cross the James some thirty miles above Richmond, where it was fordable, and then, turning down its right bank, enter Richmond. The plan was boldly conceived and begun; but it came to a hapless end. Three columns, numbering 4,000 sabres, set out, respectively under Kilpatrick, Custer, and Dahlgren. Kilpatrick from the north side penetrated the outer defences of Richmond, but was driven out, and only the last named force ever reached the James. Here, finding it in flood and beyond fording, the "contraband guide" was hanged "according to contract" and an attempt was made to duplicate Stuart's feat and make their way out down the north bank of the river. The force was, however, met and dispersed and Colonel Dahlgren was killed in a charge. On his person were found plans which related to the capture of Richmond, and sent up to Richmond, as among them were entries in a memorandum book which created a great furor, and were made the subject of a special cartel by the Confederate Government, which Lee forwarded to General Meade. But General Meade promptly disclaimed any knowledge of the incendiary portions of them, and Colonel Dahlgren's father, in a memoir of his son, has declared them a forgery.[1] General Long states that "it is but justice to the memory of Dahlgren to say that no act

[1] See J. D. McCabe's "Life of Lee," p. 651; Memoir of Colonel Ulric Dahlgren; Fitz Lee's "Lee," p. 324; Southern Historical Society Papers, April, 1877.

of cruelty was perpetrated by him during this hapless expedition." The incident, which called forth recriminating charges of great bitterness at the time, brought from Lee a temperate and wise letter, in which he discusses on the broadest grounds the futility of retaliation, which had been suggested to him, and calls attention to an alleged outrage by some of his own men, who had held up a train and robbed the passengers.

The North was enabled to recruit her armies by drafting all the men she needed, and her command of the sea gave her Europe as a recruiting ground. On October 17, 1863, the President of the United States ordered a draft for 300,000 men. On February 1, 1864, he called for 500,000, allowing a deduction for quotas filled under the preceding draft; and on March 14, 1864, he issued an additional call for 200,000 more, "to provide an additional reserve for all contingencies."[1]

The South was almost spent. Her spirit was unquenched, and was, indeed, unquenchable; but her resources, both of treasure and men, were well-nigh exhausted. Her levies for reserves of all men between fifteen and sixty drew from President Davis the lament that she was grinding the seed-corn of the Confederacy. Yet more significantly it satisfied the new general who, with his laurels fresh from the dearly won heights of Missionary Ridge, succeeded (on March 12) the high-

[1] Under the first call 369,380 men were drawn, of whom 52,288 paid commutation; under the second 259,575 men were drawn, of whom 32,678 paid commutation. Again, on July 18, 1864, a call was made for 500,000 more men, of whom 385,163 were furnished; and on December 19, 1864, 300,000 more were called for and 211,755 were furnished. (Rhodes's "History," vol. IV, p. 429, citing "Statistical Rec. Phisterer," pp. 6, 8, 9.)

minded Meade in the command of the Union army on the Potomac, that a policy of attrition was one, and possibly the only one, which must win in the end. Clear-headed, aggressive, and able, he began his campaign with this policy, from which he never varied, though the attrition wore away two men in his own ranks for every one in Lee's army.

In the spring of 1864 the President of the United States, recognizing that the people, like himself, had grown weary of having generals beaten and armies routed by Lee with an army manifestly inferior in numbers and equipment, took a new step. It was clear now to his mind that the South could not be conquered so long as Lee, at the head of an army of veteran troops, had the power to manœuvre them at will. It was equally clear to him that, whatever the public might think, the South was at last becoming exhausted, while the North was steadily growing stronger. He had some time before come to the conclusion that not Richmond but Lee's army was the proper objective of the Union armies, and he had so written his commanding general, Hooker. He now took a step further. In this state of the case, he set aside Meade, who had failed to destroy Lee after months of endeavor, and called to his aid a general hitherto a stranger to the East, but one who, in the West, had given evidence of abilities which promised to prove the kind which were needed in the situation in Virginia. He was a fighter, and so sturdy was he that he was as ready to fight after a defeat as before.

In the West were several generals who had given

that proof of unusual abilities—success—which had been lacking in the East, where the commanders were opposed by Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia. Grant, Thomas, Sherman, and McPherson had all shown military gifts of a high order. Among these the first in order having such gifts was, possibly, Grant, though it took a long time for his government to recognize them, and it required the close study of a special agent in the person of the Assistant Secretary of War before the lot fell upon him. Like Mr. Lincoln, he was of Southern blood and affiliations by way of Kentucky. He was, however, a native of Ohio. He had graduated at West Point in 1843, and had served with distinction in Mexico, as had most of the soldiers on both sides who attained high rank during the Civil War. He first attracted attention at Molino del Rey, where he got a piece of artillery up in a church tower and contributed to the success of the day. Having fallen into habits of intemperance, he had left the army and for eight years had lived in poverty and obscurity, first on a farm in Missouri and afterward as a clerk in his father's store in Galena, Ill. On the outbreak of the war he had written offering his services to the government, but his letter appears to have been ignored; and he had thereupon shown such zeal and efficiency in the organization of the volunteers in Illinois that he was appointed by the governor of that State colonel of the 21st Regiment of Illinois volunteers. His ability presently brought him command of the Department of Cairo, and when he captured Fort Henry, on February 6, 1862, and, following a sharp defeat, in

his temporary absence, of his forces besieging Fort Donelson, availed himself promptly of a fatal error of the Confederate commander and captured this fort also, with its garrison of nearly 12,000 men, he began to be esteemed a man to reckon with. In command of the Army of the Tennessee, he had narrowly missed having his army destroyed at Pittsburg Landing in the first day's fight of the battle of Shiloh, and had probably been saved by the death of Albert Sidney Johnston in the hour of victory, and certainly by the opportune arrival of Buell's army next day. But he had shown the resolution and serenity of a constant mind and had continued fighting next day as stoutly as if he had won the day before. He had indeed the gift never to know when he was beaten. At Vicksburg he had increased greatly his reputation by his able transfer of his army from one side of the Mississippi to the other, followed by his brilliant manœuvres and the successful siege and capture of this important post which had hitherto guarded the Mississippi. And finally, while suffering from a severe injury, he had ridden to Chattanooga, where matters, following on Rosecrans's defeat at Chickamauga, were in a bad way, and, arriving "tired, dirty, and well," had immediately so straightened out the tangles and infused spirit and courage that within a month he won the battle of Missionary Ridge, or Chattanooga (November 23–25), and secured possession of Chattanooga and Knoxville and command of Eastern Tennessee and the adjacent regions. Such, in brief, was the previous record of the man to whom Mr. Lincoln now turned for aid.

On the 10th of March,[1] 1864, Mr. Lincoln appointed General Ulysses S. Grant lieutenant-general in command of all the armies of the Union, and General Grant, on the 23d of March, took personal command of the armies in the East with the stipulation, it is said, that he was to be given such troops as he needed and was not to be interfered with by the government in Washington. It was without doubt a wise precaution that he took, for otherwise he might never have survived the Wilderness and Cold Harbor.

Grant was now nearly forty-two years old, while Lee was fifty-seven. We have pictures of them both as they impressed men capable of drawing their portraits.

This is a picture of Grant given by Richard H. Dana, who fell in with him at Willard's Hotel as he was about to leave for the army on the Rapidan: "A short, round-shouldered man, in a very tarnished major-general's uniform. . . . There was nothing marked in his appearance. He had no gait, no *station*, no manner, rough, light-brown whiskers, a blue eye, and rather a scrubby look withal. A crowd formed round him; men looked, stared at him, as if they were taking his likeness, and two generals were introduced. Still, I could not get his name. It was not Hooker. Who could it be? He had a cigar in his mouth, and rather the look of a man who did, or once did, take a little too much to drink. I inquired of the bookkeeper. 'That is General Grant.' I joined the starers. I saw that the ordinary, scrubby-looking man, with a slightly

[1] The commission was dated March 9, and was delivered to him by Mr. Lincoln in the presence of his cabinet the following day.

seedy look, as if he was out of office and on half-pay, and nothing to do but hang round the entry of Willard's, cigar in mouth, had a clear blue eye, and a look of resolution, as if he could not be trifled with, and an entire indifference to the crowd about him. Straight nose, too. Still, to see him talking and smoking in the lower entry of Willard's, in that crowd, in such times—the generalissimo of our armies, on whom the destiny of the empire seemed to hang! . . . He gets over the ground queerly. He does not march, nor quite walk; but pitches along as if the next step would bring him on his nose. But his face looks firm and hard, and his eye is clear and resolute, and he is certainly natural, and clear of all appearance of self-consciousness. How war, how all great crises, bring us to the one-man power!"[1]

It should be said, and the fact has been much overlooked, that while to Grant's dogged resolution to wear out his opponent, no matter what the cost to his own side, was due in the end the exhaustion of the South; yet the tactical detail with which the military operations were conducted was to a considerable extent attributable to Meade. The commander at Gettysburg has never gotten the credit generally that he deserves. Because he could not destroy Lee at or after Gettysburg, and failed to attain a decided success in the autumn campaign following, he lost the prestige that he should have had for an accomplishment greater than any other general had attained. And in the campaign

[1] Adams's "Dana," vol. II, p. 272. Rhodes's "History of the United States," vol. IV, pp. 438, 439.

of 1864–65 he conducted the military operations of the Army of the Potomac, though he did not dictate the policy. Grant himself declared later in his official report of July 22, 1865, that, while he commanded all the armies, he had tried, as far as possible, to leave General Meade in independent command of the Army of the Potomac. "My instructions for that army," he said, "were all through him and were general in their nature, leaving all the details and execution to him."[1] He directed the general operations, but Meade directed mainly the movements of the several corps and under him fought the battles. Yet undoubtedly Grant was the master spirit and the abler soldier.

Mr. Lincoln had some time before reached the conclusion, as most other thinking men had, that so long as Lee's army remained in the field, commanded by Lee, the South could not be subjugated. And in this view General Grant wholly concurred. The destruction of Lee's army, therefore, became the avowed object of both Lincoln and Grant. The method was simple in conception—to give man for man—or, if that would not accomplish the object, to give two men for one till the dread tale was exhausted. In execution it required not only man for man, not only two men for one, but two men for every one that Lee had in his army.

The infantry of the Army of the Potomac was, prior to the advance on Richmond in the spring of 1864, organized on Meade's suggestion and formed in three grand corps, the Second, Fifth, and Sixth Corps, com-

[1] Humphreys' "Virginia Campaign of 1864 and 1865," p. 6.

manded respectively by the three veteran generals, Hancock, Warren, and Sedgwick, each corps numbering about 25,000 men. To these were soon added the Ninth Corps under Burnside. The cavalry was commanded by General Sheridan, a young officer whom Grant had brought from the West with him, having observed in him unusual abilities and the fighting quality which he himself possessed.

In general terms the plan adopted for the new campaign was to have Butler, who commanded at Fortress Monroe, move on Richmond by way of the James, the York, and the Peninsula, and for Grant to march the Army of the Potomac by a route parallel with the Richmond and Fredericksburg Railway, which railway, with the Rappahannock and the Potomac, formed his line of communication with his base and with Washington. This base he established at Belle Plain. There were men and supplies of all kinds in abundance. The difficulty in the way was the Army of Northern Virginia with its general. This army lay along the Rapidan in the Piedmont, about Orange and Gordonsville, at the junction of the Orange and Alexandria Railway, and the Virginia Central Railway, which led south-east to Richmond and west to the valley of Virginia and to the south-west. One plan which was considered at Washington was to move by Lee's left flank against this important line of communication and thence on Richmond; but for good reasons this plan was discarded and the movement by Lee's right flank was adopted. This latter plan, though it led through more difficult country than the other, would

place Grant's lines of communication on the opposite side of his army from Lee and would effectually secure them from attack. It would also enable him to cover Washington and receive reinforcements as needed.

Grant's plan was a comprehensive one. In brief, it was to "attack all along the line," and thus, first, keep all the Confederate forces fully engaged, so that one army should not be able to reinforce any other; secondly, destroy all the lines of communication between Richmond and the South and South-west; thirdly, destroy all the sources of supply of the Southern armies; fourthly, destroy those armies themselves and finally capture Richmond. In accordance with this plan, Sherman, with his army of 100,000 men, was to march from Chattanooga eastward through Georgia and the Carolinas; Sigel, with his army of 20,000 men, was to march from Western Virginia on the two lines that connected Richmond with the valley of Virginia at Staunton and with the South-west at Lynchburg; Butler was to march on Richmond with his army of 40,000 men from Fortress Monroe by way of the Peninsula and the James and co-operate with Grant; and finally, Grant himself was to march on Richmond with his great army of 140,000 men by way of the region lying between the Virginia Central Railroad and the Richmond and Fredericksburg Railroad.

On the day agreed on, the 4th of May, the campaign began. Grant crossed the Rapidan on his march to Richmond, Butler moved on Richmond from Fortress Monroe by way of the James, Sherman set out on his

march across the South, and Sigel proceeded with his movements, a column of 6,000 men, under Averell, marching on South-west Virginia, while Sigel himself, with his main army, moved on the upper Shenandoah Valley to menace the Virginia Central Railway and the Railway from Charlottesville to Lynchburg and the South-west. All of these operations held direct relation with the Richmond campaign,[1] and eventually all contributed their full share to its successful termination. For in the end Richmond fell because its lines of communication with the region which supplied Lee's army were destroyed.

Grant, resolved on his policy of "persistent hammering" (a phrase coined by him after the events which proved its effectiveness), and, assured of vast levies and of a free hand, to carry out his plan on his own line no matter what the cost, crossed the Rapidan on the night of the 3d of May, 1864. Marching by Ely and Germana Fords, as Lee had predicted he would, he committed himself boldly to the tangled forest of the Wilderness, where one year before Hooker had met such signal defeat. His army numbered over 140,000 men of all arms—more than double the number that Lee now commanded—and he had 318 field guns. His equipment was possibly the best that any army could boast that ever took the field. His baggage train would, as he states, have stretched in line to Richmond, sixty-odd miles away. Lee had, with which to oppose him, 62,000 men of all arms and 224 guns. But the men were the Army of Northern Virginia, and a better

[1] "The Shenandoah Valley in 1864," George E. Pond, p. 5.

weapon was never fitted to the hand of a more skilful master. Whatever measure of fame he had attained hitherto, it was to be more than doubled in the ensuing campaign.

Lee has been criticised of late for not having posted Longstreet nearer to the prospective battle-field of the Wilderness than Gordonsville. It was not a matter of choice with him, but of necessity. The dispersion of his troops was due to the ever-growing difficulty of subsistence. He probably knew as well as his critics the disadvantages of such wide dispersion, and had his orders for their concentration been promptly carried out, he would have struck Grant on the first day with his full force instead of with only half of it.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE WILDERNESS CAMPAIGN

If Grant had harbored any delusion that Lee was a general strong only in defensive operations, he had reason quickly to be undeceived. Lee, who, for reasons of his own, had permitted him to cross the river unopposed, prepared to strike him amid the tangles of the Wilderness, where his superiority in men and arms might prove less preponderant, and two days later, having called in his widely separated divisions—separated for the want of subsistence—though he was outnumbered two to one[1]—threw himself upon him, inflicting upon him losses before which any other general who had yet commanded the Army of the Potomac would have recrossed the river, and even Grant recoiled. For two days (the 5th and 6th) the battle raged, and Lee forced Grant, with losses of 17,666 men[2] from his direct line of march and led him to call on his government for reinforcements. "Send to Belle Plain," he wrote on the 10th, "all the infantry you can rake and scrape." And he needed them all. On the evening of the second day an attack similar to Jackson's at Chancellorsville was made on Grant's flank, and his

[1] Rhodes's "History of the United States," IV, p. 480. Humphreys' "Virginia Campaign of 1864 and 1865," p. 17.

[2] The Century Co.'s "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War," IV, p. 182.

left taken in reverse was driven back when an accident similar to that which changed the issue of that day changed this day's issue. As Longstreet, who commanded the advancing troops, rode down the Plank Road accompanied by Generals Kershaw and Jenkins, a volley was poured into them by his own men. Jenkins was killed and Longstreet dangerously wounded. It stopped the movement which otherwise might have forced Grant back across the Rapidan. Lee's forces were largely outnumbered, but to make good the difference Lee offered at more than one critical moment to lead them in person. Officers and men alike refused to advance while he remained at a point of danger, and he was forced to the rear. But not only in the battle of the 6th, but also in the battle of the 10th and in the furious fight at the "bloody angle," where, when his army was imperilled, he again rode forward to inspire his straining troops and was again driven by them to the rear, the fact that he had felt it necessary to place himself at their head called forth new efforts from the jaded soldiers and stirred them to redoubled valor.

"These men, General," said Gordon, as he rode with him down the lines at Spottsylvania, where they rested for a moment prior to the final charge, "are the brave Virginians." Lee uttered no word. He simply removed his hat and passed bareheaded along the line. I had it from one who witnessed the act. "It was," said he, "the most eloquent address ever delivered." And a few minutes later as the men advanced to the charge, he heard a youth, as he ran forward crying and

reloading his musket, shout through his tears that "any man who would not fight after what General Lee said was a —— coward."

In no battle of the war did Lee's genius shine forth more brightly than in the great battle of Spottsylvania Court House, where, after the bloody battle of the Wilderness, he divined Grant's plans, and again cutting him off from the object of his desire, threw himself upon him in a contest whose fury may be gauged by the fact that the musketry fire continued in one unbroken roar for seventeen hours, and trees were shorn down by the musket balls.

By the evening of the 7th, while his staff were yet in darkness as to Grant's next move, Lee, with his unerring sense of the soldier, had divined it, and he sent General Anderson with his division to relieve Stuart at Spottsylvania.[1] His adjutant-general, who was sent to apprise Stuart of the approach of the infantry, found him already engaged. The supports arrived just in time; for the cavalry had been driven back, and Grant believed that he already occupied the Court House, as he reported in his despatch of the 8th. But Lee's promptness "deranged this part of the programme," driving him back and holding him off during a week's fierce fighting, when Grant, having lost 40,000 men, finding his enemy too obstinate and ready to die in the last ditch, drew off by the flank toward the southward, whereupon Lee again headed him and, facing him at Hanover Junction, forced him down the north bank of the Pamunkey to Hanovertown.

[1] Taylor's "General Lee," p. 238.

"Before the lines of Spottsylvania," says Swinton, "the Army of the Potomac had for twelve days and nights engaged in a fierce wrestle in which it had done all that valor may do to carry a position by nature and art impregnable. In this contest, unparalleled in its continuous fury and swelling to the proportions of a campaign, language is inadequate to convey an impression of the labors, fatigues, and sufferings of those who fought by day, only to march by night from point to point of the long line and renew the fight on the morrow. Above 40,000 men had already fallen in the bloody encounters of the Wilderness and Spottsylvania, and the exhausted army began to lose its spirits."

Such was the defence which Lee presented to his able antagonist and his great army after the exhaustion of the hungry winter of '64. Had he not been ill and half delirious in his ambulance when Grant attempted to cross the North Anna and failed to get his centre over after his two wings were across, Grant's star might have set on the banks of the North Anna instead of rising to its zenith at Appomattox. But Lee was suddenly stricken down, and while he was murmuring in his semi-delirium, "We must strike them—we must never let them pass us again," Grant, after the most anxious night of the war, drew back his wings and slowly moved down the Pamunkey to find Lee still across his path at the historic levels of Cold Harbor, where valor and constancy rose to their highest point.

"I stood recently in the wood where Gregg's Texans put on immortality," wrote a Southern historian, "where Kershaw led three of his brigades in person to

compensate them for the absence of the fourth." [1] It was this need to compensate their troops for want of reserves or equipment which so often led the generals of the Confederacy to the firing line. But it was a costly expedient. Four times, in what appeared the very hour of complete victory, the prize was stricken from the hand by the commander being shot from his saddle. First, when General Albert Sidney Johnston was slain at Shiloh, in the moment of victory. Next, when, at Seven Pines, Joseph E. Johnston was struck from his horse, and what might have proved a crushing defeat for McClellan was turned into an indecisive battle. Again, when Jackson was driving all before him at Chancellorsville, and fell, like Wolfe, victorious. And finally, when, in the Wilderness, Longstreet was wounded and incapacitated at the critical moment when victory hovered over his arms.

It is related that on one occasion during a battle Lee, being asked by his staff to leave one spot after another where he had posted himself, finally exclaimed, "I wish I knew where my place is on the battle-field. Wherever I go some one tells me it is not the place for me."

In fact, so far from Lee being chiefly good in defence, the quality of his military spirit appears to one who studies his career to have been distinctly aggressive, possibly even too aggressive. This is Longstreet's charge against him. No captain ever knew better the value of a quarter of an hour or the importance of strik-

[1] Leigh Robinson's Address on the Wilderness Campaign, Memorial Volume, Army of Northern Virginia.

ing first when the enemy was preparing to deliver his blow. In truth, he was, as Henderson declares, an ardent fighter, and possessed in an extraordinary degree the qualities of both physical and moral courage. Lee's personal daring was the talk of his army. "I hear on all sides of your exposing yourself," wrote one of his sons during the Wilderness campaign, urging him to be more careful for the sake of the cause. And again and again, at some moment of supreme crisis, as at the Wilderness when Longstreet's van appeared at the critical moment, and as at the "Bloody Angle" at Spottsylvania, which Grant had seized and where he was massing his picked troops to the number of 50,000, he rode forward to put himself at the head of his exhausted soldiery to lead them in a charge on which hung the fate of his army. Yet, as Henderson says, in discussing Lee's audacity in attacking with an inferior force McClellan's well-equipped army, secure in their entrenchments, "he was no hare-brained leader, but a profound thinker, following the highest principles of the military art." That this will be the final verdict of history there can be little doubt.

After crossing the Rapidan the advance of Grant by the flank was under almost continuous attack by Lee. "Measured by casualties," says Rhodes, in his history of this campaign, "the advantage was with the Confederates." This far from expresses the real fact that Grant received a mauling which, as Lee's adjutant-general, Colonel Walter H. Taylor, said the next day in his note-book, would have sent any other general who had hitherto commanded the Union army back

in haste across the river. It was Grant's fortitude which saved him, and led him to tell General James H. Wilson that he would fight again. As Lee had assaulted at the Wilderness, so again at Spottsylvania he barred the way of his indomitable antagonist, and again and again forced the fighting, until, after holding him at the North Anna, where he offered battle, he had wedged Grant from his direct march on Richmond and forced him down the left bank of the Pamunkey to end at last his direct march on Richmond on the doubly bloody field of Cold Harbor, the only battle which Grant declared afterward he would not have fought over again under the same circumstances.

Foiled in that campaign of his immediate object, and having lost more men than Lee had at any time in his entire army, Grant adopted a new line of attack, and secretly crossing to the south side of the James, which he might at any time have reached by water without the loss of a man, attempted to seize Petersburg, as McClellan had planned to do, by a coup, but, failing in his object, began to lay siege to that place with a view to cutting off Richmond from the South, a feat which he only accomplished after eight months' fighting, in which he lost over 60,000 more men.

Such in general terms was the last and, possibly, the greatest campaign of Lee. But as so much of Lee's fame as a soldier must rest on this final campaign in which he showed new powers and resisted the mighty forces thrown against him until the South collapsed from exhaustion, it is proper to give for those who

may be interested in his military career a more detailed account of his masterly defence of Richmond and show clearly the reason of its ultimate failure.

When Grant, on the evening of the 4th of May, 1864, found the last of his four army corps on the south side of the Rapidan without a shot having been fired save by the pickets along the stream, he undoubtedly felt that he had taken a long step toward Richmond. Unlike McClellan, he did not overestimate his opponent's strength, nor did he, like Hooker, falter in the presence of his masterly ability. He had supreme self-confidence based on rare courage and rare ability to command and to fight, and he knew that he outnumbered Lee more than two to one, and that in his army were the flower of the North, men as valorous as ever drew breath. He knew that Lee's forces were dispersed over a considerable extent of country in the open region about Orange and Gordonsville from twenty to thirty miles to the westward, and that they were ill-clad, ill-shod, and ill-fed. It was, accordingly, without a tremor that, having crossed the river unopposed, he boldly committed himself to the narrow roads that led southward through the western part of the Wilderness, in the assurance that Lee would throw his army across his path somewhere beyond the Wilderness, and that in the battle which would thus be joined he would defeat him. Lee, however, had other plans than those Grant assumed he would follow. He had divined Grant's plans as well as if he had sat with him at his council board, and he had formed his own. He had predicted to his generals that Grant would soon move

and would cross the Rapidan at the very fords he selected. Accordingly, he had given his orders, and on the day that Grant crossed the river and headed for Richmond, Lee struck his head-quarters tent, and sending orders to Anderson at Rapidan to follow without delay with his division, and to Longstreet at Gordonsville to follow with his two divisions there, he himself took Ewell's Corps—two brigades—and two of Hill's Divisions, with artillery and cavalry, and struck straight for Grant's army. Marching in two columns, Ewell to the left on the Turnpike and Hill on the old Plank Road, he pushed forward, and that night, while Grant supposed Lee was still about Orange or moving southward, Ewell's advance guard bivouacked within four miles of Warren's corps, which bivouacked at the old Wilderness tavern at the intersection of the Germana Plank Road and the Orange Turnpike. Still unsuspecting Lee's approach, Grant, on the 5th, moved on through the Wilderness toward Richmond, his army in two columns—on the right Warren's and Sedgwick's corps, heading for Parker's store, on the Plank Road toward the western edge of the Wilderness, while Hancock's corps (the Second) took the route to Shady Grove Church, to the south-eastward. It was not long, however, before Lee made known his intention to attack without waiting for Grant to emerge from the Wilderness. Ewell, advancing on the Turnpike at right angles to the Federal line of march, quickly came in contact with Griffin's division, which Warren had posted on the Pike to cover his flank during his march, and was soon heavily engaged. Warren, finding Ewell's

Corps on his right, formed line of battle, and Sedgwick forming on his right, they advanced and attacked Ewell in heavy force. Meanwhile Getty's division was sent by Sedgwick to hold Hill, who was advancing on the Plank Road toward Parker's store, until Hancock could arrive with the Second Corps. Warren's sharp attack on Ewell was at first successful, for the Confederates had not on the field more than half the number of the Federals who attacked them.[1] But rallying, the Confederates swept forward, and not only regained the ground they had lost, but captured four guns and a large number of prisoners. But as the fight slackened on the left, where Ewell was pushing Warren back along the Turnpike, it began to increase in fury along Lee's right, where, on the Plank Road, Heth's and Wilcox's Divisions of Lee's Second Corps were holding back the masses of Grant's Second Corps. This they did all the afternoon, stubbornly maintaining their ground against the repeated assaults of Hancock's well-led divisions. Happily for Lee's army, the ground he had selected on which to bring Grant to bay was well adapted for his purpose. As in the battle of Chancellorsville, he had chosen the Wilderness for his battle-ground, because its tangles of far-stretching forest, intersected by only a few roads and broken by but a few openings, prevented the preponderant numbers of the enemy in men and guns from being availed of by his antagonist.

Lee, however, when he marched straight for Grant's

[1] Humphreys' "Virginia Campaign of '64 and '65," p. 17. Rhodes's "History of the United States," IV, p. 440. Nicolay and Hay, VIII, p. 352.

army with his Second Corps and part of his Third Corps, had expected that Longstreet, who was at Gordonsville, little more than ten miles further away from his object of attack than he himself was, would follow immediately and join him not later than the afternoon of the 5th. To insure this he had sent him as guide an officer who knew the roads, to pilot him. But Longstreet was incurably slow. A large, heavy, ponderous man, his movements were correspondingly slow, and possibly his mental operations partook of the same deliberateness. Whether it was at Seven Pines or at Malvern Hill, at Second Manassas, or Gettysburg, or the Wilderness, he was late; and in this instance, as in those which had preceded it, he came near causing the most serious consequences to Lee's army. Had Longstreet been up when Ewell made his gallant attack, or even when Wilcox and Heth, in the afternoon, were holding on with desperation to the lines against which Hancock was dashing his straining brigades, an advance might have been made which might possibly have driven Grant back toward the Rapidan and have saved the carnage of the succeeding weeks. Longstreet had, however, sent off the guide furnished him and had subsequently missed the road. So, when darkness fell on Wilcox's and Heth's exhausted divisions in the Wilderness woods, the First Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia was going into bivouac at Verdiersville, some ten miles away. Fortunately, Longstreet was fully awake now to the urgency of the situation, of which Lee had apprised him, and, breaking camp soon after

midnight, he pushed forward for the Wilderness, within whose western tangles the armies of Grant and Lee lay confronting each other. Had he been two hours later it might have been too late to save the situation. As it was, he was barely in time to save the rest of Lee's army from, possibly, irretrievable disaster. Lee's plan was that which he so often adopted with success: to assail one wing of the enemy—this time Grant's right —and while doing so to mass his forces on the enemy's other wing and overwhelm it. When night fell on the 5th, each commander knew that the next day's sun would rise on a great battle, and each prepared to take the offensive. Grant, whose plan was to use his preponderant numbers and attack along his whole line, prepared to move to the attack at five. Lee was so sure that Longstreet and Anderson would both be in place that the exhausted divisions of Wilcox and Heth had been told they would be withdrawn and their places taken by the fresh troops. Lee was obliged by Longstreet's absence to wait before advancing his right, and on the left, where Gordon was eagerly urging Ewell to give him permission to turn Grant's right which he had discovered to be exposed, Ewell had felt compelled to refuse his assent and content himself with withstanding most of the day Sedgwick's fierce assaults. On the right Wilcox and Heth had not even replenished their ammunition chests and cartridge boxes, and when Hancock with his corps, Getty's division of Sedgwick's corps, and Wadsworth's division of the Fifth Corps attacked them in the early morning, the two Confederate divisions, unable to

make an effectual resistance, were swept back in confusion. It looked as though Lee's right wing would be crushed. At this critical moment Longstreet arrived on the field. Whatever his dulness in preparation, or his sloth on the march, on the field of battle all his senses were quickened. As a fighter he had no superior in either army. Making his dispositions swiftly, he promptly threw his men across the space where the lines had given way and where men were now streaming to the rear, and, with Kershaw on the right of the Plank Road and Field on the left, pressed forward to meet the advancing Federals. The change was instant and complete, and as the fresh troops struck the long line of Hancock's men, who had supposed that they had overcome all opposition, they gave way under the shock and were pressed back to their original lines of entrenchment. The presence of Lee himself added to the ardor of the charge that swept back the advancing Federal divisions and changed a reverse into a victory.

The Confederate commander must have felt during the early hours of the contest much more anxiety than he displayed, for the delay of Longstreet completely paralyzed his plans; and now as the troops advanced to the attack which was to re-establish his lines, Lee rode forward and put himself at their head. The effect was instantaneous. The cry arose, "General Lee, to the rear!" and as the men passed to the front he was called to, "Go back, General Lee; this is no place for you. Go back, we'll settle this." [1] And they did

[1] Taylor's "Lee," p. 234.

settle it. The lines of gray swept forward and Lee's broken line was re-established.

An account of this episode was given afterward by an eye-witness, General Lee's chief of artillery. After speaking of posting some guns in a clearing, he continues:

"All night Heth, Hill, and Wilcox remained at their posts in the thicket, with their men really under arms and not only ready for a night encounter, but occasionally exchanging shots with the enemy. By those guns I bivouacked that night and General Lee very near. Early next morning (the 6th) the fight was renewed by Hill with his brave division commanders and their sternly enduring soldiers. Before long, however, they sent word to General Lee—by whose side I was on horseback—that they were much worn and even harder pressed than on the previous day, and must inevitably fall back if not reinforced. General Lee sent exhorting them to hold on and promising support; he also sent to hasten Longstreet to the rescue. . . . Not long after, our exhausted fellows came back in numbers and the occasion arrived for the grape from those guns to stem and shatter the hastening bluecoats. It was at this critical moment that General Lee, deeply anxious for the appearance of Longstreet's column, greeted a score or two of gray boys who rushed double-quick into the little opening occupied by our guns and ourselves. The general called out, 'Who are you, my boys?' They immediately cried out, 'Texas boys.' The general instantly lifted his hat and waved it round, exclaiming, 'Hurrah for Texas! Hurrah for Texas!'

By this nearly a regiment had gathered, and at word from the general to form, they at once did so. The general placed himself at their left with the shout, 'Charge!' Many voices cried, 'General Lee, to the rear!' But he kept his place at the left, square up with the line, repeating with his thrilling tone, 'Charge, boys!' Then a tall gray-bearded man very near him stepped from the ranks and grasped the bridle of General Lee's horse near the bit and said to him respectfully, yet resolutely, 'General Lee, if you do not go back, we will not go forward.' The general yielded. But the gallant Texans sprang forward with a shout and the enemy's advance was driven back." [1]

Lee was not now able to carry out his plan as originally conceived. A reconnoissance to the right disclosed the fact that Hancock's left might be assailed with promise of good success, and of being turned by a movement around his extreme left south of the Plank Road. With R. H. Anderson's Division, now arrived on the field, added to his command, Longstreet attacked Hancock in front with three of his brigades (Gregg's, Bennings's, and Laws's) and sent a strong force of four brigades under Mahone (G. T. Anderson's, of Field's Division; Mahone's, of R. H. Anderson's Division; Wofford's, of Kershaw's Division, and Davis's Brigade) to assail and turn his flank. "The movement was a success, as complete as it was brilliant." The enemy was swept from their front on the Plank Road, where his advantage of position had been already felt by Lee's lines. The Plank Road was gained and the enemy's

[1] S. P. Lee's "Life of William N. Pendleton, D.D.," p. 326.

lines were bent back in much disorder. In the advance General Wadsworth, whose division, with that of Stevenson, had been fighting Field's Brigades on the north of the Plank Road, was mortally wounded and fell into the hands of the Confederates. The advance of the Confederates was impeded by the fire which had caught in the woods and was now raging furiously; but Hancock had been driven back nearly a mile to a second line of strong breastworks which had been erected along the Brock Road at right angles to the Plank Road.

Everything had gone in favor of the Confederates to this point, and now Lee prepared to dislodge Hancock by again turning his left. Longstreet, pressing his advantage, made his dispositions to turn his flank again while he threw against him his victorious brigades. His advanced brigades were already in action when again the same accident occurred that had befallen on the fatal 2d of May a year before in almost the same place and manner. Longstreet, riding along the Plank Road with his staff and a number of other officers to direct the advance of his ardent troops, received a volley that swept across the highway from a body of his own men lying in the woods less than a hundred yards away. The gallant Jenkins was killed outright and Longstreet was so badly wounded that he was borne from the field and was incapacitated for many months. To those who have studied the history of war it is not necessary to explain the fatal effects of the loss of a commander. In all history the story of battles is full of the tragic consequences of such a loss, from the time of Antony, in the moment of victory flinging a world

away by turning his back on the field and following Cleopatra in her flight. The consequences that follow the relaxation of the commander's grasp are scarcely less dire in modern warfare. Three times already, as heretofore noted, the Southern armies had suffered from this far-reaching fatality—at Shiloh, at Seven Pines, at Chancellorsville, and now in the Wilderness—when the victorious soldiery of the South were sweeping forward in the full tide of victory with an ardor which would have been irresistible, the mind that directed them as one organic whole was suddenly removed; the carefully planned movement lost its directing force and the power that, continuously applied, would have been irresistible spent itself futilely in general but undirected application.

"This catastrophe of Longstreet's wound and disablement brought to a stop a movement which bade fair to rival Jackson's famous flanking movement at Chancellorsville a year before. R. H. Anderson was assigned to the command of the First Corps, as Stuart had succeeded Jackson on the earlier field, and Mahone took Anderson's Division of Hill's Corps; but the time consumed was precious, and the impulse which might have swept Hancock from his stoutly held breastworks was lost. Portions of the line were carried, but time had been given to mass sufficient troops to retake and hold them. On Lee's left, Gordon having at last secured consent from Ewell to attempt a turning movement after Ewell had personally reconnoitred the ground and verified the report of the scouts that Grant's right was sufficiently exposed to promise good results.

moved forward with three brigades about sunset, and, in a gallant attack, carried Sedgwick's lines, and, rolling back his right flank, drove him from his entrenched position for a mile, capturing some 600 prisoners, including two brigadier-generals, Seymour and Shaler.[1] It was, however, too late to accomplish more; and as darkness fell the combat died away in the thick tangles of the forest, each army glad to gain the merciful respite of the night's rest.

The darkness had settled down with Grant's lines driven back on both wings far beyond the points they had held in the morning, and with the Confederates attacking on both wings with marked success, while his army was decidedly shaken. Officers unsurpassed for gallantry found themselves in a maze of doubt as to what the morrow would bring forth. "If we do not die to-day we shall to-morrow," wrote a little later one who spoke for many others. But if the stoutest hearted among them found cause for gloom, one heart had not quailed. As one of his generals rode up to Grant the following morning out of the confusion and gloom of the wretched night, he calmly called to him: "It is all right, Wilson; we will fight again."

That Grant had been terribly hammered, nearly all soldiers are agreed; that he had not in the least wavered in his resolution, is equally apparent. 17,666 men were his losses in these two days,[2] or, by Humphreys' reckoning, 15,380 men.

He had gotten a mauling that had cost him two men

[1] W. H. Taylor's "Lee," p. 237.
[2] F. Lee's "Life of Lee," p. 322.

for one that his opponent had lost, and that would have put any one of his predecessors on the retreat; but he had not had a tremor. He had calculated that he could afford to lose two men if his hammering cost his antagonist one, and he would fight again.

What might have happened if Longstreet had been up when Lee struck Grant while his army was toiling through the narrow roads of the Wilderness, expecting to reach open country before forming line of battle, must be relegated to the gloomy sphere of the "might have been." Lee, opening the battle of the Wilderness when his opponent had three men for every one that he could put in his battle line, won the honors of one of the fiercest battles of the war and added new laurels to the chaplet of his imperishable renown.

Next day the two armies lay in each other's front, each strengthening his position as best he might and expecting the other to assault. As the Union commander was the aggressor, and had more than double Lee's force, the latter might well await his attack. Toward afternoon, however, it became known that Grant was moving his baggage-train covered by his heavy lines. It was believed by some in both armies that he was on the retreat for the Rappahannock. Lee's adjutant-general and military secretary recorded in his notebook a query as to this new general, adding that any one of his predecessors would have recrossed the river after such a defeat. Stuart, who was always alert, reported to Lee in the afternoon that Grant was moving his wagons toward Chancellorsville.[1] Lee alone

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 333.

divined that in moving, Grant would head, not for the north bank of the Rappahannock, but for the north bank of the James. All day he spent on his lines studying his enemy's designs, and, while his staff officers felt assured that Grant was fixed in their front, he penetrated his purpose with an infallible instinct. In wise anticipation of Grant's design, Stuart had already been sent to Spottsylvania Court House to guard the important roads which met there; and at nightfall Lee detached four brigades of Longstreet's Corps, now commanded in Longstreet's absence by R. H. Anderson, and sent them to this point, despatching with him his adjutant-general to apprise Stuart of the approach of the infantry. He was not a moment too soon. Grant had already formed his plan of withdrawing from Lee's front by night and, marching by the left flank, of seizing the strategic point of Spottsylvania Court House; and that night at 9 o'clock he began his march. So assured, indeed, was he of the successful execution of his movement that next day he sent his government a despatch speaking of it as though it were an already accomplished fact. He "stated the positions to be occupied by his several corps at the end of the first day's march, in which Warren's corps was placed at Spottsylvania Court House." But as Colonel Taylor, Lee's adjutant-general, says in his "General Lee," "Lee disarranged this part of the programme."

Warren, marching for the Cross Roads at Spottsylvania Court House, found himself seriously delayed in the darkness by the staff and head-quarters equipment of Meade, as well as of the commanding general, which

occupied the road ahead of him; and when he arrived within two or three miles of his destination he found Sheridan's cavalry in his front, held back by Fitz Lee's Cavalry, posted across the Brock Road and another road which joined it two miles from Spottsylvania. The gossip of the army was, that in an interview between Warren and Sheridan at this point were laid the seeds which were to bear such bitter fruit for Warren at the battle of Five Forks, nearly a year later. It is reported that Warren ordered Sheridan to get his men out of his way, and stated that if he could not drive the enemy from their front he (Warren) had men who could do it, a speech which offended Sheridan deeply. However this may have been, acting in accordance with this idea, Warren moved his men forward in line of battle and drove the Confederate cavalry from the position which they had hitherto held, driving them across an open field into the woods beyond it. Warren's line advanced across the field in pursuit, and when within a few score yards of the edge of the woods, found themselves unexpectedly facing Anderson's lines lying behind a fence on the edge of the woods, who suddenly poured into their faces a sheet of flame. Breaking under the shock, they were driven back across the field and along the Brock Road, and the lines were eventually established near this place in a wide crescent, with Lee's left and right resting on the Po and the coveted Cross Roads of Spottsylvania Court House well covered in the centre.

Humphreys pays General Fitz Lee the tribute of saying that he saved Spottsylvania that morning for

General Lee. This is quite true. But General Lee saved it for the Southern Confederacy by the masterly ability with which he divined and met Grant's movement.

## CHAPTER XVI

### SPOTTSYLVANIA COURT HOUSE

The lines of the two armies at Spottsylvania Court House were, says Humphreys, formed to hold the positions which each one occupied at the close of the fighting on the first day, the 8th. This accounts for the Salient.

About midway of Lee's line of fortifications, which on his left ran nearly eastward from the Po, lay a tract of rising ground about a half mile in width and from three-quarters of a mile to a mile in depth. Just back of it was a low bottom through which crept a small branch in front of a farm-house at the top of a gentle slope.[1] This rising ground appeared to command the ground in front of it, and in order to avoid the low ground and hold the elevation, the entrenchments suddenly swerved north-eastward for about three-quarters of a mile, following the conformation of the ground, then turned back at an angle and ran south-eastward for a distance of between three and four miles to the Po River. This space thus enclosed within the outjutting entrenchments came to be known later, when thousands of brave men had died for its possession, as the "Bloody Salient," or the "Bloody Angle." More properly, however, a crook in the western

[1] The McCool house.

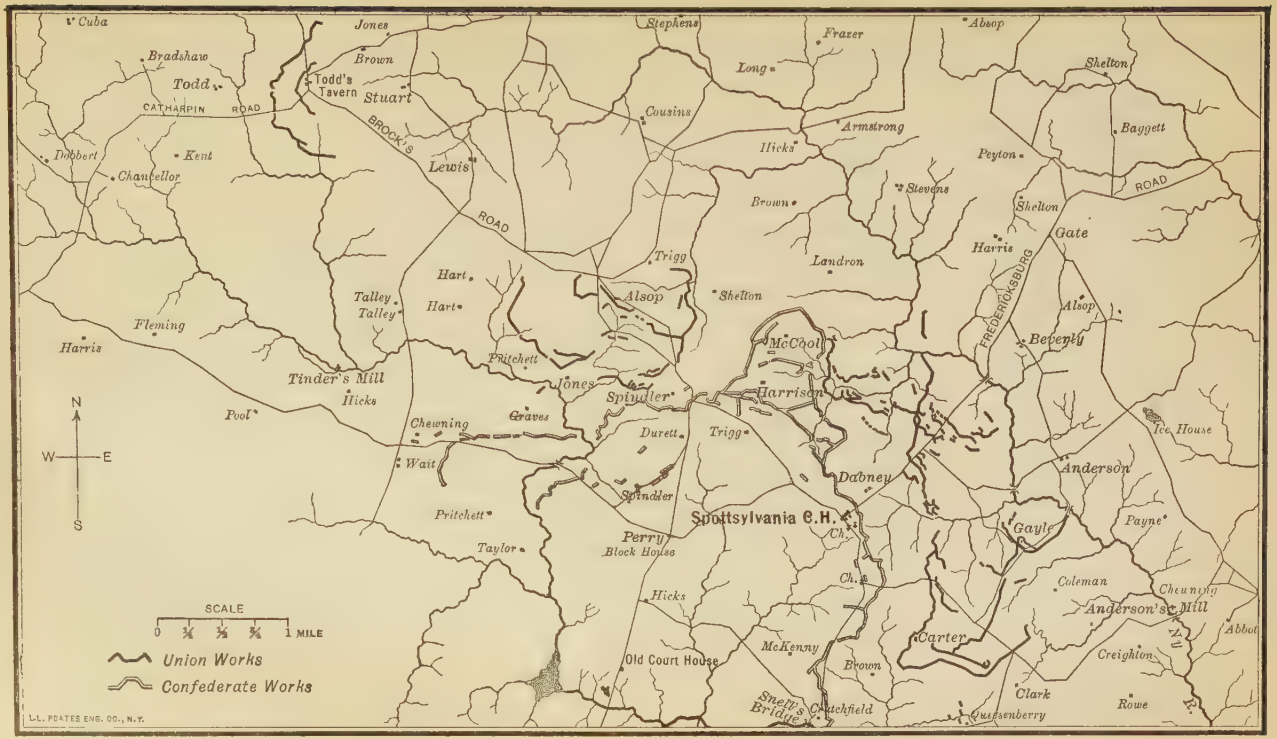
line near the apex of the Salient was the point known as the Bloody Angle. At a distance of two hundred yards or so on either side of the Salient was woodland which formed a protection for any force formed to attack it. Jutting out as it did for such a distance beyond the general direction of Lee's line, it was the weak point in the Confederate defences, and this Lee's eye detected the instant he arrived on the ground and rode along his lines as was his wont, and a second line of defences was run across this Salient. The lines of the Salient were, however, held on to. In Lee's dispositions Longstreet's Corps was on Lee's left, faced by the Fifth Corps (Warren's). Next to him came Ewell, his lines running north-eastward almost at right angles to Longstreet and embracing the Salient. At the apex they turned southward to join Hill, who defended Lee's right. Rodes's Division, of Ewell's Corps, occupied the west side of the Salient, with Johnson's Division next him holding the apex and the east side. Across the Salient about half way to the apex was a second line of entrenchment, where Gordon was placed in reserve.

Lee had outmarched and outgeneralled Grant so far, and had barred his way to the coveted point whence the roads led to Lee's own communications with Richmond. But Grant's preponderant force made the turning of his line always a danger to be met.

The next day, the 9th, was spent mainly in adjusting the lines and constructing fortifications, and except for the skirmishing between the lines, which was constant, and one movement to turn Lee's left, no fighting was done. The enemy, however, sustained a severe

loss in the death of the gallant General Sedgwick, who in the skirmishing was shot on his lines at a fork on the Brock Road just after he had rallied a soldier for dodging the bullets of the sharp-shooters and told him that they could not hit an elephant at that distance. The forces on both sides were working like beavers making entrenchments for the fight which all knew the morrow would bring.

Only one serious movement was undertaken this day. An effort was made on the afternoon of the 9th to turn Lee's left, and for this purpose Hancock was sent around across the Po with several divisions; but was unable to make much progress and waited for daylight to carry out his movement. Lee, being notified, sent Early back to meet this threatening force, which was being retarded by Hampton's Cavalry, and Early, attacking sharply along a little stream known as Glade Run, just after two of the Federal divisions were withdrawn to aid Warren in a direct assault on Lee's left centre, moved forward. A stubborn resistance was offered by Barlow's division, which held the ridge above the Po, and Heth's Division, which bore the brunt of the work, was twice repulsed in the afternoon, but he drove the enemy across the river, and Lee, strengthening his left and entrenching behind the Po, ended the turning movement which threatened his communications with the railroad and Richmond. The next day, the 10th, the battle of Spottsylvania began in earnest. Warren and Hancock and Wright advanced in the afternoon about four o'clock in a gallant but futile assault against Lee's left; the whole line of assailants sweeping up to




UNION AND CONFEDERATE WORKS AROUND SPOTTSYLVANIA COURT HOUSE

the heavy abatis in front of the trenches, and some of the assailants actually reaching the parapet where Longstreet's Corps awaited them, only to be shot down in the furious struggle. Three hours later another assault was made along this part of the line by Hancock's corps; but again the assailants were swept back with frightful loss.

In another part of the line farther toward the centre the assault was for a time more successful. At the left of the Salient, above the intersection of the Brock Road and the Louisa Court House Road, where Doles's Brigade, of Rodes's Division, lay in what came afterward to be known as the "Bloody Angle," Upton's division, of the Sixth Corps, having formed in four lines behind a wood, made an assault under cover of a terrific fire from the Federal artillery, and sweeping over the breastworks, carried the line for several hundred yards, capturing a number of prisoners estimated at from 350 to 1,200, together with the guns of the battery defending that angle. Had the assailants been promptly supported as was ordered, the fight at this point might have been as renowned as was that which occurred two days later, when Hancock again carried the line of the Salient and for a time put Lee's army in such peril that Lee felt it necessary to place himself at the head of the troops sent in to recapture the line which had been broken. Upton, however, was not supported, and after a short time Gordon arrived from the second line, which he held as a reserve and, together with Battle's Brigade, Daniel's Brigade, and the remnant of Doles's Brigade, attacked

the intruders, while Walker's Brigade attacked them in flank and recaptured the lost lines together with the guns and many prisoners. The total Federal loss on this day is set down by Federal authorities at something over 4,000 men, while the Confederate loss was about half that number.

The following day, the 11th, Grant, though still resolute in his belief that he could destroy Lee's army if he were but given men enough, must have begun to entertain some doubt, at least, as to the ease with which this destruction could be accomplished. On the 10th he sent a despatch to Washington, saying: "The enemy hold our front in very strong force and evince a strong determination to interpose between us and Richmond to the last. I shall take no backward steps. . . . We can maintain ourselves, at least, and in the end beat Lee's army, I believe. Send to Belle Plain all the infantry you can rake and scrape. . . ." This was far from the state of mind which declared that Lee's army was his objective. The next day he must have been in yet further doubt as to the manner of defeating his antagonist; for although his eulogists have declared that he never countermanded an order when once given, a statement in itself far from exact, on this day Burnside was first ordered to withdraw the Ninth Corps from the south side of the Ny; then was ordered to resume his position.[1] Later in the day such evidence was given of an attempt to turn the Confederate left that Early was ordered by Lee to take possession of Shady Grove by light next morning

[1] Humphreys' "Campaign in Virginia in '64 and '65."

and hold it, a move necessary to protect the road to Louisa Court House, by which Lee secured his supplies. But during the night it was discovered that the real movement of the enemy was toward Lee's right, and Mahone's Division, with two brigades of Wilcox's Division, which had been sent with Early, were moved by Lee back to the right to meet this new movement.

Grant had, indeed, determined to repeat on a larger scale the attack on the outlying Salient which had so nearly succeeded and so signally failed on the evening of the 10th, and for this purpose he was massing his troops on both sides of the Salient under cover of the woods which stretched about it, with a view to making the assault next morning at daylight. In this he was favored by the fact that that evening Lee had received information that, added to the withdrawal of Burnside's Corps to the north of the Ny River, tended to show that Grant was preparing to repeat his manœuvre of moving by the left flank toward Richmond, and in consequence orders were given to withdraw the artillery from the Salient occupied by Johnson's Division, to have it available for a counter move to the right.[1]

In truth, Lee, entrenched across Grant's selected path to Richmond, was very difficult to dislodge, though he had little more than half as many men as Grant had in his front. Every effort which Grant had made to break his lines had failed disastrously, and whichever way he turned he found himself balked. As he had wired on the 10th for all the reinforcements

[1] Taylor's "Lee," p. 224.

that could be raked and scraped, even for 10,000 men from the defences of Washington, so on the 11th he wired again saying: "The arrival of reinforcements here will be very encouraging to the men, and I hope that they will be sent as fast as possible and in as great numbers." It was in this despatch that he declares, "I propose to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer," a declaration which he found impossible to fulfil; for by the time the summer was half out he was in the trenches south of the James, having lost in fighting it out on this line as many men as Lee had in his army on any day since the campaign opened. Indeed, in this despatch Grant gives an idea of the terrible cost of the slight advance which he had made. "We have now," he says, "ended the sixth day of very heavy fighting. The result to this time is much in our favor, but our losses have been heavy, as well as those of the enemy. We have lost to this time eleven general officers, killed, wounded, and missing, and probably 20,000 men." Had he waited until after the next day's battle at the "Bloody Angle" he might have added another 7,000 to the terrible tale, and had he waited but another six days, when he abandoned his efforts to destroy Lee at Spottsylvania, he must have given the dread score of killed, wounded, and missing at nearly twice 20,000 men. Lee's loss in the fight over the "Bloody Angle" he might have placed at possibly 10,000 men, including the prisoners taken. The numbers are so staggering that the mind fails to grasp the terrible truth that these were men and merely deals with them as ciphers, as Grant did in his despatch.

All the night of the 11th Grant was massing his troops, behind the screen of the darkness, about the top of the Salient, with a view to rushing it at dawn. Hancock led three of his divisions to the point, and staff officers were sent to Burnside to spur him to prompt action. Wright, who had succeeded Sedgwick in command of the Sixth Corps, was to give aid as needed. The movement in front of Lee's lines was not unnoticed, and Johnson sent word to return his artillery; which drew from General Lee the remark that his generals were sending different accounts, Early reporting that the enemy were moving around his left and Johnson that they were massing in his front. The guns were ordered back, but different artillery was sent, and the ground being unknown, it only reached the lines in time to be taken. The lines, indeed, were broken at the moment that the guns (Page's and Cutshaw's battalions) were being wheeled in at a gallop. All but two of the twenty-two guns returned were captured, and only the two front guns got in a shot.[1] As the night fog lifted, out of the mist came something like 40,000 men sweeping forward, line after line, like the waves of the sea, enveloping the top of the Salient on all sides. Had Johnson's artillery been in place the result might have been different; but though the infantry poured a steady fire in their assailants' faces, the impulse was too great to be resisted. They swarmed over the breastworks in masses; the various commands mingled together, and inside the furious contest raged on with the

[1] These were Captain William Page Carter's guns. Letters of John W. Daniel, Robert M. Hunter, and A. W. Garber, Richmond *Times-Dispatch*, November 26, 1905.

men who held them to the last, many of whom were slain with the bayonet in the fierce hand-to-hand fight which ensued before they were overwhelmed and subdued. When the smoke cleared away the Federals were in possession of over a thousand yards of Lee's centre and had captured some 4,000 men, including Major-General Edward Johnson and Brigadier-General George H. Steuart, and twenty guns. It looked as though Lee's army were cut in two by a force fully equal to the destruction of both fragments. But this army was composed of the best fighting men of the South and was captained by one who, like Napoleon, left nothing to chance. Across the base of the Angle thus seized, another line of entrenchments had been thrown to meet precisely such an emergency, and here Gordon was posted in reserve. During the night he, on hearing that the enemy were massing to assault the line, had sent Pegram's Brigade to Johnson, and as soon as the firing began he sent R. H. Johnston forward only to be met by the onrush of Hancock's troops as they swept on down the interior of the Salient. Withdrawing Pegram's and Evans's Brigades to the cover of his reserve entrenchments, he reformed them and led them forward to recover the lost ground. It was at this critical moment, when the fate of his army appeared to hang in the balance, that Lee in person appeared on the scene and rode forward to place himself at the head of his men. Riding to the head of the column forming for the charge he took off his hat and pointed to the captured line. The cry was instantaneous from general and men: "Go to the rear, General Lee!" Lee, still

determined, held his place; when Gordon appealed to his men. "Is it necessary," he demanded, "for General Lee to lead this charge?" "No! no!" they shouted; "we will drive them back if General Lee will go to the rear." And rushing forward they made good their word. Their first attack fell on Hancock's left, on the east side of the Salient, which they cleared after a bitter struggle, recapturing (for a time) some of the lost guns. At the same time Rodes was sending forward Daniel's and Ramseur's Brigades to clear the west side of the Salient. This also was done, though with immense losses, and for much of the time the enemy held the reverse side of the fortifications, the Confederates the inner side, the fight now being hand to hand; at other times the men firing at each other point-blank through the crevices of the logs which formed the fortifications. General Daniel was killed; General Ramseur was badly wounded. Two of Mahone's Brigades, Perrin's and Harris's, now came in on Ramseur's right, and one of Wilcox's Brigades (McGowan's) came up also. Perrin and McGowan both were shot soon after getting on the ground, the former being killed, the latter seriously wounded. From this time the fighting continued with unabated fury, and, indeed, ferocity, all through the day and on into the night until it ceased from the sheer exhaustion of the combatants. Meantime, while Hancock's and Burnside's corps were contending over the bloody Salient, under Grant's orders one of Burnside's divisions (Potter's) had attacked and captured a portion of Hill's line on Lee's right, held by Lane's Brigade, and, with the line, two guns. Lane,

however, rallied his men and, reinforced by two of Wilcox's Brigades, and Doles's Brigade, promptly recaptured the fortifications and the guns, and pressing back the enemy, made good his line. Then with a view to relieving Ewell to the westward, they pushed on, driving Potter's troops before them, capturing a battery of six guns and many prisoners, until Lane found himself in front of a large force of the enemy advancing in two lines, when he retired to his lines without being able to bring off the guns. These advancing lines were Willcox's division, of Burnside's corps. Grant's plan was to press an advance along his whole line, and while the fight raged about the bloody Salient, where Sedgwick's old corps, Hancock's corps, and much of Burnside's corps were struggling to break through Lee's centre, Warren was ordered to attack Anderson's line, where Longstreet's men lay guarding Lee's left. Two assaults were made, after "Warren had opened all his guns," in a heavy fire on the lines, the men of the Fifth Corps advancing gallantly under a hail of lead and iron; but they were repulsed with heavy loss, and in a short time "a furious fusillade" broke out between two Federal brigades who, by mistake, attacked each other in the woods. Next, Warren was ordered to the west face of the Salient; but at the last moment it was given up. Lee's line, broken in the centre by the sheer weight of numbers in the dim dawn, had been reformed and held intact throughout the long day against an assault whose fury and duration were unknown in the annals of war. The fighting is said to have been more continuously fierce and deadly than in

any battle of the war. For seventeen hours on a stretch a sleet of musketry swept the ground in front of the contending lines, gnawing down forest trees and eating away the fortifications in a leaden storm. The dead in the trenches had to be lifted out time and again to make room for the living who took their places only to follow them and be lifted out in turn by those who followed them. It is not a question of who was bravest where all were brave. Nearly 6,000 brave men fell that day on each side. It was the supreme proof of American constancy. On the Southern side two brigadier-generals were killed, four were severely wounded, and one major-general and one brigadier-general were captured.

When morning dawned on the 13th Lee had established his line across the base of the Salient and still presented to Grant an unbroken front resting as before on the Po and guarding the roads to his line of communication. But he had lost nearly 10,000 men.

Lee having thwarted Grant's earnest and costly attempt to break through his lines, it was determined by the latter to try an assault on Lee's right, and at the same time assault his centre again with the Second and Ninth Corps, Hancock's and Burnside's. Accordingly, Warren and Wright were on the night of the 13th moved across opposite to where Hill held Lee's right, to open the attack next morning at daybreak. Lee, however, had brought Mahone from his left to support Hill. Again that power of divining what his opponent would attempt came to his aid, and when the enemy appeared in increased force on his right he was prepared to meet them. When Upton's brigade occupied a high and

commanding point on the south side of the Ny, Lee had Mahone's Division (Wright's Brigade) in place ready to support his cavalry and dislodge him. Grant now tried approaches, and for three days gave himself up to advancing his entrenchments and establishing batteries for another assault, and on the night of the 17th Hancock's and Wright's corps were ordered back to their old lines under cover of darkness in the hope that Lee's left and left centre, denuded to strengthen his right, might be carried by a coup. But there, too, Lee was ready for them, and though the attack was made at daylight as planned and was pressed for hours by three corps of the Army of the Potomac, aided by their powerful artillery, they were met with a fire "which completely swept the ground in front," and the only result of the assault was to swell the already appalling roster of the dead and wounded by over 2,000 men.

Grant, balked in his effort to break Lee's line of defences, at last gave it up and planned once more to do that which he had once declared he never did—manœuvre. Orders were issued to move by the left flank on the night of the 19th to the south-west; but Lee, again suspecting him, sent Ewell forward around Grant's right to demonstrate and learn his intentions, which was effectually accomplished, Kershaw holding Ewell's lines while the latter was feeling the enemy, and Ewell making such a threatening attack that Hancock and Warren, who were already headed south, were forced to send troops back on the double-quick, and Grant's plan was broken up for at least that day.

Thus ended the famous battles of the Wilderness and

Spottsylvania Court House, with Lee's army of half the size of his opponent's assuming the offensive after two weeks of such fighting as the American continent had never hitherto witnessed. The latter's losses had been over 32,000 killed and wounded. Lee's losses are not known, but were heavy enough. "The Confederate losses," says Alexander, "can never be accurately known for any of the battles from now until the close of the war, as few reports could be made in such active campaigns. Livermore's estimates give 17,250 for the same battles, the missing not included." [1]

Three facts stand forth pre-eminently during this deadly campaign: Lee's genius, Grant's resolution, and the infinite courage of the officers and men on both sides.

[1] Alexander's "Memoirs," p. 529.

## CHAPTER XVII

### SOUTH ANNA AND SECOND COLD HARBOR

While the death struggle was going on day after day in the Spottsylvania forests between Lee and Grant, a struggle was going on elsewhere in Virginia both to the north and south of the main battle-ground, yet which was intimately connected therewith. Sigel, whose part in Grant's general scheme to compass Lee's destruction was to sweep through the valley of Virginia and destroy not only the source of Lee's supplies, but the Virginia Central Railway, his line of communication therewith, was approaching Staunton with a force of 5,500 men when he was met and defeated at Newmarket, on the 15th of May, by Breckinridge with a force of 5,000 men. It was in this battle that the Cadet Corps of the Virginia Military Institute achieved fame by marching forward under fire as if on parade, dressing on their colors while shot and shell tore through their ranks, recalling, in their coolness and undaunted gallantry, the *Gants Glassés* at the siege of Rethel.

Meantime Lee had to bear the burden of the defence of Richmond from attack in another direction. To the southward, on the day following Grant's move toward the James, another part of Grant's plan was attempted, with, if possible, more signal failure. At City Point, where the Appomattox empties into the

James, lay General B. F. Butler with the Army of the James, two army corps, the Tenth and the Eighteenth, and a division of cavalry, in all some 38,600 officers and men, and 88 guns.[1] General Butler had been "instructed by General Grant that Richmond was his objective point," that he was to "move at the same time with the Army of the Potomac, take City Point and that vicinity, . . . operate on the south side of the James, . . . and that his army and the Army of the Potomac were to co-operate. . . . Should Lee fall back upon Richmond, the Army of the Potomac would unite with the Army of the James. . . . If he should be able to invest Richmond on the south side, so as to rest his left upon the James above the city, the junction of the armies would preferably take place there." [2] Should he learn that the Army of the Potomac was advancing on Richmond, he was to "attack vigorously"; and if he should not be able to carry the city, he would, at least, be able "to detain a considerable force of the enemy there." It was all very well conceived and, up to the actual execution, well carried out.

Butler, under these orders to co-operate with Grant, had moved on Richmond by way of the James on the same day (May 4) that Grant moved by way of the Wilderness. On the 5th, the same day that Lee struck Grant in the Wilderness, he reached Bermuda Hundred, twenty miles below Richmond, under cover of an imposing fleet of war vessels; and next day he advanced

[1] Humphreys' "Campaign in Virginia in '64 and '65," p. 137.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 138.

to within two miles and a half of the Richmond and Petersburg Railway, only six miles from Petersburg and sixteen from Richmond. An attempt to reach this railway line was defeated by a South Carolina brigade which was opportunely halted there on its way to Richmond by General Pickett, who was in charge of the defence of Petersburg, until relieved by Beauregard, when he was summoned from South Carolina for the defence of Richmond. At this time Petersburg was substantially ungarrisoned. Pickett had there but one regiment, and to the south-east, along the Blackwater, a part of Clingman's Brigade of North Carolinians, stationed there to contest any advance from Suffolk; so completely had the south side been stripped to enable Lee to hold Grant back.

The next few days were spent by Butler in attempting to establish his lines near Richmond and to cut the railways both north and south of Petersburg. The destruction of the bridges south of Petersburg by the Federal cavalry delayed the troops being brought up from the South by Beauregard; but those whom he secured proved sufficient. By the time that Butler made his serious attack on Petersburg, Beauregard had got together some 20,000 men. At this time, however, when Butler first appeared, Beauregard had in Petersburg only Wise's Brigade, some 2,500 men, to which were later added Martin's Brigade and Dearing's Cavalry. On the 12th of May, the same day that saw the terrific battle over the "Bloody Angle" at Spottsylvania, Butler set out to turn Beauregard's right and to destroy him utterly. Advancing up the James he sent his

cavalry to destroy the two railways from Richmond to the South, and he himself prepared to dislodge Beauregard, entrenched along a line between Drewry's Bluff and Petersburg, while he called on Admiral Lee, in command of the fleet, to ascend the river and keep pace with his advance. An attack on the entrenchments was repulsed, after which Beauregard withdrew to his inner entrenchments. Butler now thought that everything was going favorably and planned to attack next day with his whole army, but for some reason deferred the attack till the 16th. But a better soldier than Butler was commanding the force opposite to him, inferior in numbers as it was. The defences of Richmond and Petersburg had been laid out by masters of the science of fortification, at whose head was one equally the master of the science of fortifications and of their defence. So long as a thousand men to the mile to defend them could be found they were impregnable. Thus, when Butler attacked the defences of Petersburg, Beauregard was not only ready to defend them, but to assume the offensive. "General Butler," says the same high Union authority on whose studies so much of the history of this campaign has been based, "could not assault Drewry's Bluff entrenchments; he could not move to turn them, and he could not fall back to his Bermuda Hundred lines or to a new position on the river without abandoning his campaign against Richmond with the Army of the James. In other words, he was completely paralyzed so far as concerned offensive operations." [1]

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 149.

Thus, when, on the morning of the 16th, Butler was preparing to destroy Beauregard, Beauregard forestalled him, and, having formed his men during the "sma' hours" of the night, at daybreak made an attack with Ransom's Division and two of Hoke's Brigades on Butler's right that shattered not only his dream of conquest, but, after a fierce contest of an hour's duration, carried the right of Butler's breastworks held by Heckman's brigade, of General Baldy Smith's corps, capturing the brigadier, many prisoners, and five stands of colors. The fight along the centre and right was more obstinately contested; but eventually Gillmore, who commanded there, was forced out of his entrenchments, having, he says, been ordered to retire and reinforce General Baldy Smith, who was being driven back and hard pressed. A dense fog which had fallen toward morning and enveloped everything doubtless contributed to the surprise of Smith's lines; but it also confused the advancing Confederates, who had to be halted and realigned. And the failure of Whiting to come up on the right from Petersburg with his two brigades, as he had been ordered to do, marred Beauregard's plan and prevented as complete a rout of Butler's army as he had anticipated. Yet, it was sufficiently complete. It saved Petersburg, and for the rest of the month, Butler, who retreated that night to his Bermuda Hundred entrenchments, was "hemmed in" where he could not menace Richmond further; or, to use Grant's expressive phrase, was bottled up as tightly as if he had been corked up in a bottle. He had lost in the battle 3,500 men, 5 guns, and 5

stands of colors, while Beauregard had lost some 2,200 men. Butler lost, beside, pretty much whatever reputation as a general he had previously retained. Grant, on learning of his failure to accomplish anything, ordered him to forward to him, by way of the James and the York, under General Baldy Smith, all troops except enough to hold his position; and on the 29th, Smith left by water for West Point, on the York, with 16,000 men to join the Army of the Potomac, which he did in time to be one of the sufferers at Cold Harbor. Butler retained some 14,000 men, but so little was he considered that Beauregard sent Lee, under the latter's orders, more than half of his command.

Having failed in his plan to destroy Lee's army, Grant now moved by the left flank nearer to Richmond, with the design, says Humphreys, of drawing him into a battle in the open country before he could occupy and fortify a new position; or, if this trap should fail, of marching on and making a successful turning movement and throwing his army between Lee and Richmond. With this in view, Hancock's corps was moved on the night of the 20th to Guinea Station, on the Richmond and Fredericksburg Railway, and thence to Bowling Green and Milford Station, in the direction of Richmond; Warren's corps was moved on the 21st in the same direction; Burnside's corps was to follow, taking the telegraph road, the most direct of the highways; and Wright's corps was to follow last; the whole army being headed for Hanover Junction, beyond the North Anna River, only twenty-five miles from Richmond. The plan was an excellent one and its execution began

duly on time. That it did not come to a successful conclusion was due solely to Lee's generalship. Watchful as ever, the enemy had no sooner begun to move than Lee moved also, and though Grant had the start and lay nearer the North Anna, Lee outstripped him for the goal. When the head of Grant's columns arrived in sight of the North Anna, there on the other side lay Lee's army across his path.

On the first intimation that Grant was withdrawing from his front, Lee had moved Ewell to his right; and when Burnside, marching for the North Anna, reached the Po, there on the south bank across the telegraph road lay Jackson's old corps to contest his way. It was not an inviting prospect, and the Ninth Corps was turned aside and followed Hancock's line by the more roundabout way by Guinea and Milford.

Lee's transfer of his army on this occasion from Grant's rear to his front was one of the most skilful manœuvres of the war. He was not one to be caught in the trap which had been so carefully set. He let no man select a battle-ground on which to whip him. If adverse fate brought him there, he made the best of it; but no man was able to lure him to his destruction. He had no idea of becoming enmeshed in an engagement with Grant on disadvantageous terms, and in this race for the North Anna, while the Army of the Potomac rested, the Army of Northern Virginia marched. Hancock was across the Mattapony at Milford, nearly half way to the North Anna, on the morning of the 21st, when the skirmishers of Grant's other corps pressed up to Lee's entrenchments at Spottsyl-

vania to find him still there. When Hancock arrived at the North Anna, Lee was entrenched across his road. He had marched from Spottsylvania with only two hours' rest. All the afternoon and night of the 21st his army was marching parallel with Grant's army, resolute to gain the strong position of the South Anna. Warren's outposts heard the rumble of guns and trains all night long on the Telegraph Road; and when Warren, on the 22d, reached the Telegraph Road, the rear of Longstreet's Corps was only four miles ahead of him. Lee's cavalry kept in touch with the advancing Federals on every road throughout the entire march.

Lee, who was with the front of Ewell's Corps, having, on the morning of the 22d, reached Hanover Junction, where the two railways from Richmond to Fredericksburg and to Gordonsville and the south-west crossed each other, telegraphed his arrival to the government in Richmond, which was in some anxiety over the situation. Breckinridge, having defeated Sigel at Newmarket on the 15th, had been ordered to Hanover Junction, where he arrived on the 20th and was awaiting Lee with some 2,500 men; and Pickett's Division and Hoke's Brigade, Colonel Lewis commanding, had been ordered from before Petersburg to join him. As Anderson and Hill came up, the former that evening, the latter next morning, Lee made his dispositions. Ewell was placed on his right, resting on the south bank of the North Anna, commanding a crossing some three miles below the railway; Hill, with Pickett's Division, some 5,000 men which had been sent by Beauregard, commanding south of Richmond, to meet Lee

at Hanover Junction, was on Lee's left, extending from the North Anna south-westward across the Virginia Central Railway to Little River, near Newmarket, three or four miles away, the two lines forming a wide angle, with the blunt apex resting on the North Anna for nearly a mile, commanding the Telegraph Road and the Oxford Crossings, the former a half a mile or more above the Richmond and Fredericksburg Railway bridge, the latter two miles or so above it where the North Anna runs between high bluffs. The next afternoon Warren's corps crossed the North Anna at a ford at Jericho Mills, opposite Noel's Station, on the Virginia Central Railway, about five miles above the Telegraph Road Bridge, and was promptly attacked by Hill as he was deploying in line of battle and his line driven back on his artillery. Next morning the Sixth Corps followed the Fifth, which entrenched on the ground occupied above the river. That afternoon Hancock's corps reached the river by the Telegraph Road and after a spirited fight drove off the bridge guard posted on the north side of this stream. Burnside's corps also reached the river by the Telegraph Road, but failed to effect a crossing at the Oxford, as Grant had planned. That night Lee withdrew his advanced line and, holding the line along the river on the bluff above Oxford, occupied the fortifications extending from above the Oxford along the bluff and then south-eastwardly across the railway, where he had prepared to deliver his attack on Grant's wings, while he held back his centre beyond the river at the Oxford. Burnside was ordered on the 24th to carry the crossing of the river

in his front, the Oxford; but although two divisions were thrown across the river higher up with a view to menacing the Oxford, it was found that Lee's disposition had been too well made to be successfully challenged. And that night Grant, having failed to make good his crossing, turned his back on Lee's entrenchments and withdrawing his wings, already across on the right and left, marched down the river to a point twenty-odd miles below that at which Lee had offered battle. It is said that Grant declared that this night, when with his wings beyond the North Anna he found himself unable to connect them, was the most uneasy night of the war. In his report he simply says that, finding Lee in a position stronger than either of the two previous ones he had occupied, he abandoned his intention to attack him there and crossed the Pamunkey at Hanovertown below the junction of the confluents of the Pamunkey, and some thirty miles below Hanover Junction, with the design, as he stated to Washington, of turning Lee's position by his right.

Lee wrote his wife from Hanover Junction on the 23d: "General Grant, having apparently grown tired of forcing his passage through, began, on the night of the 20th, to move around our right toward Bowling Green, placing the Mattapony River between us. Fearing he might unite with Sheridan and make a sudden and rapid move upon Richmond, I determined to march to this point so as to be in striking distance of Richmond and be able to intercept him. The army is now south of the North Anna. We have the advantage of being nearer our supplies and less liable to have our

communication trains, etc., cut by his cavalry. Still I begrudge every step he takes toward Richmond."

Lee's position was, indeed, a strong one, and it was a soldierly instinct of a high order that had led him to occupy it. Burnside was the object of considerable animadversion for not forcing a passage at the Oxford, as Hancock had done at the Telegraph Road. In fact, Lee's position above the Oxford was impregnable and no force could have carried it. The fortifications along the bluff and across the plateau are there to-day to show how Lee placed his army like a wedge between the lines which Grant chose for his two wings. With these wings on one side of the river and the centre on the other side it was a serious position which the Army of the Potomac occupied from the 23d to the 26th, and but for one of those strange fatalities which appeared to visit the Southern arms, Grant's divided wings might have found it fatal. It happened that Lee was suddenly struck down by an attack of what would now be probably termed ptomaine poisoning. And at the moment when he was about to reap the benefit of his masterly disposition he was prostrated in his tent and the opportunity passed. His adjutant-general tells how, as he lay in his tent, he kept murmuring in his feverish half-delirium, "We must strike them! we must strike them! They must never be allowed to pass us again." But the occasion was lost, and when Lee was able to leave his bed, Grant was crossing the Pamunkey, twenty-odd miles below the point where he had declined Lee's offer of battle.

On the afternoon of the 28th of May the greater part

of Grant's army crossed the Pamunkey—at the ferries about Hanovertown, some thirty miles below Hanover Junction and seventeen miles from Richmond—and took position across the roads leading to the Confederate capital. But once more Lee placed himself across his path. On the evening of that day Lee's army, having marched twenty-four miles since morning, took position between Grant's army and Richmond, covering those roads from the Chickahominy almost to Hanover Court House. It was the fourth time in the great manœuvres that Lee had headed Grant and forced him to fight for the line he had selected; and as before, so now, Lee had chosen his line of defence. It was already historic ground, for two years before, almost to a day, Lee had won his first victory over McClellan along the uplands above Beaver Dam Creek and Cold Harbor; and to reach Richmond Grant must pass across this historic field. Lee's cavalry, under Fitz Lee, Hampton, and Butler, had been sent to keep touch with the enemy should he advance directly toward Richmond; and on the 28th, as Sheridan moved forward along the Richmond Road in advance of Grant's corps to find what difficulties were in the way, he came on the Confederate cavalry dismounted and holding the road near Haw's shop, eight miles or so north-east of Richmond. A sharp engagement ensued which lasted until near nightfall, when the Confederate cavalry, being heavily outnumbered, fell back. But so fierce had been the fight that Sheridan reported them as having been supported by a brigade of 4,000 South Carolinians armed with long-range rifles.

On the 26th, as he retired from before Lee on the South Anna, Grant, in explaining to Washington this retrograde movement, added that "Lee's army is really whipped." He was now to learn how wide this view was of the fact. He had manœuvred Lee out of his defensive position on the South Anna only to find him across his path on the Chickahominy. Lee had posted on his right, resting on Beaver Dam Creek, Longstreet's Corps, which owing to Longstreet's wound was still commanded by Anderson; Ewell's Corps (Early commanding, as Ewell was ill) came next; and on his left, with their front protected partly by the head branches of Totopotomoy Creek and the impenetrable thickets through which they run, were posted Hill's Corps and Breckinridge's command, extending westward across the Virginia Central Railway, a mile or so north of Atlee Station. Opposite Lee, at first, on Grant's right, were the Sixth Corps; the Second Corps (Hancock's) next; the Fifth Corps (Warren's), with Wilson's cavalry on Grant's right wing and the rest of Sheridan's cavalry guarding his left wing, while Burnside's corps (the Ninth) was held in reserve. Grant had received already in reinforcements some 30,000 men, and was expecting some 16,000 more under General William F. ("Baldy") Smith. These men, whom he had ordered from Butler's army at Bermuda Hundred on the 28th, when he had reason to fear that Lee had again flung himself across his path, were on their way to him by the York River route. His army numbered now—before Smith's arrival, which took place on the 30th—not less than 110,000 men. Lee had received, since crossing

the North Anna, reinforcements composed of Breckinridge's command from South-west Virginia, 2,500 men; Pickett's Division of Longstreet's Corps, 5,000 men; and lastly, Hoke's Division, 5,000 men, which joined him on the night of the 28th at Cold Harbor. His army now numbered about 60,000 men.

The next few days were spent in skirmishing and feeling the opposite force and in laying off the lines for the pitched battle which each commander knew was imminent. Grant's lines on his right extended a good distance beyond Lee's left, and on the 30th Wright's and Hancock's corps were ordered to try to turn Lee's left; but failed to reach the point necessary, owing, it is stated, to the impassable character of the swamps and thickets in their course. Burnside's and Warren's corps were pushed forward at the same time (Warren on the left), but came on Early entrenched beyond a swampy bottom and were stopped. As the enemy were also extending toward his right, General Lee now sent Early to his right to stop it and moved Anderson to the right to take his place, thus keeping steadily ahead of Grant. Early was moved over to the Mechanicsville Road, and, advancing beyond Grant's left, encountered one of Warren's brigades moving forward, and Rodes's Division, sent forward in a charge, drove them back to the cover of their artillery, which stopped the pursuit. Next day Grant threatened to attack all along the line; but Lee's front appeared too perilous, and beyond a cavalry fight at the cross-roads at old Cold Harbor, in which Sheridan pressed Fitz Lee back, the day was mainly occupied in general

skirmishing and strengthening lines. Lee now moved Anderson further to his right beyond Early, thus extending his lines southward to keep pace with Grant's manifest side-stepping toward the Chickahominy and Richmond. Heavy skirmishing went on every day.

Grant, so far balked, now began to direct his attention to securing the important point where various roads to Richmond and the lower James intersected, and for this purpose he ordered the Sixth Corps from his right to move by night to Cold Harbor to relieve Sheridan. Lee countered by moving Longstreet farther to the right, and Hoke yet farther. Lee was still too ill to mount his horse; but he rode along his lines in a little carriage, so great was the exigency of the situation.[1] That afternoon, the 1st of May, the battle of "Second Cold Harbor" really began. The Sixth Corps, supported by the newly arrived troops under General Baldy Smith, made an attack along the road leading westward from old Cold Harbor to Richmond, and broke through where Hoke, on Lee's extreme right, extended beyond Kershaw, of Longstreet's Corps, with an interval between them. Happily, Hunton's Brigade, of Pickett's Division, was near by, and marching promptly to Hoke's aid, the lost ground was quickly recovered, while Kershaw, on Hoke's left, recovered the lost ground on his right and connected with Hoke in a new line. Humphreys places the losses in the Sixth and Sixteenth Corps in this encounter at 3,300 killed and wounded. The Confederate losses were also heavy.

[1] "Life of General William N. Pendleton," by S. P. Lee, p. 337.

That afternoon the force opposite Lee's right was ordered to be increased by Hancock's corps, which marched by night from its position opposite Lee's left; but on arrival near old Cold Harbor the troops were too much broken down to engage, so the assault on Lee's right was deferred till late in the afternoon, and then was again deferred until daylight of the 3d. When daylight came Lee was ready for this, as he had been for Grant's former assaults. Anticipating the enemy's plan to attack his right, Lee, on the 2d, met Grant's move by extending his line south to the Chickahominy. He that morning sent Breckinridge and Hill with two of his divisions to his right, while Fitz Lee was sent across the Chickahominy to picket the roads on that side should Grant attempt to cross to the south side. The armies now lay in line of battle opposite each other for the final struggle on "this line," ranged as follows: On Lee's right, Wilcox's and Mahone's Divisions of Hill's Corps; then Breckinridge. Next came Longstreet's Corps, Kershaw with three brigades of Field's Division, and, on the left, Early with Heth's Division extended to the Shady Grove Church Road and beyond. On the Federal side, Hancock was now opposite Lee's right; next to him Wright (the Sixth Corps); then Smith with the Eighteenth Corps; then Warren (the Fifth Corps); and Burnside (the Ninth Corps) was in support of Warren. On Grant's right flank was his cavalry, while on Lee's left, opposite them, was his cavalry, except Fitz Lee's Division, which was beyond the Chickahominy. The whole line was some six miles long, with Grant overlapping Lee's left with his preponder-

ant numbers. Both sides, officers and men alike, knew that the next day was to see a decisive battle, for both sides knew well that Grant was still resolved to fight it out on this line, and he was now at the end of the line. Officers passing among the Union troops found them sewing their names and addresses on their coats. Like the Spartans at Thermopylæ, they were preparing to die.

It was barely light on the 3d of June when Grant's left and centre, three full corps, moved from their breastworks and advanced against Lee's right and centre; Hancock, Baldy Smith, and Wright all moving in concert and rushing forward along a line extending nearly six miles from left to right. Grant had selected the region of Cold Harbor for his attack, because, it is said, he thought that if Lee attempted in his retreat to cross the Chickahominy he would be in a perilous position.[1]

He was now to discover his mistake, and at what a terrible cost! The attack made by his army was gallant and desperate. Beginning with Hancock's left, where Barlow's veteran division led the way with a rush which swept over Lee's first line, and extending to where, far to the northward, Burnside was attacking Early beyond the Shady Grove Church Road, it continued until more men had been mowed down by the leaden sleet from Lee's steadfast lines than fell in the same time during the war. They were simply slaughtered along a stretch of nearly six miles. They were again and again sent forward only to be mercilessly

[1] Humphreys' "Campaign in Virginia in '64 and '65," p. 181.

torn to pieces by the lines of flame which swept them from front and oblique till flesh and blood could stand no more, and the gallant Army of the Potomac quailed and lay still in face of the order to charge again. Finally Grant and Meade both saw that it was a hopeless task to set and gave orders to desist; but not until, for the first time possibly in the history of that brave army, officers and men had throughout a long line failed to respond to an order to advance. Late in the evening, as Lee reported next day, one more attempt, "final but furious," was made to carry the position where Breckinridge and Hoke were establishing their skirmish line, but "the enemy was soon repulsed." Thus ended the furious battle of Second Cold Harbor; for though Grant attempted to reach Lee's lines later it was not by assaulting again, but by approaches only, and by the 11th he knew that this move also was hopeless and was planning to cross to the south side of the James and effect what Butler had failed to accomplish —the capture of Petersburg.

Grant's account of this last battle on his chosen line was hardly sufficient. He dismisses in a sentence the bloodiest and most signal defeat he had ever suffered. "On the 3d of June we again assaulted the enemy's works in the hope of driving him from his position. In this attempt our loss was heavy, while that of the enemy, I have reason to believe, was comparatively light." This was hardly an adequate historical statement of a battle in which over 110,000 men were totally defeated by an army of less than 60,000, with a loss to the former of over 8,000 men and to the latter of less than 1,000

men. The number of casualties in the Army of Northern Virginia during this period, from the 27th of May to the 12th of June, are nowhere stated. Humphreys conjecturally places the killed and wounded at between three and four thousand, the missing at a thousand more.[1] The Federal losses from June 1 to June 3, inclusive, Humphreys gives at 12,970. McParlin, in "The Medical and Surgical History of the War," places Grant's losses, from the time he crossed the Pamunkey till he left Cold Harbor, at 17,129.[2] Whichever figure be correct, Grant's losses had been prodigious, and unless it be conceded that this sacrifice of more than three men for one of his opponent's was the only method by which Grant could achieve his end, the future historian is likely to revert to the judgment of the time when Grant lost 60,000 men in thirty days—that it was not good generalship. The harsh name given it then was "butchery."

In fact, Cold Harbor was one of the most signal and disastrous failures in the history of the war. Even Humphreys, usually so open and complete, fails to convey the least idea of the absolute and disastrous defeat to which Grant had led his brave army. Grant declared long afterward that Cold Harbor was the only battle of the war which he would not fight over again under the same circumstances. This was but a tardy and incomplete admission of defeat. He was defeated and, with the summer but begun, he was forced to abandon "this line" on which he had boasted three weeks before that he would fight it out if it took all

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 192. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 191 and note.

summer. Lee with but half his force had outgeneralled him; within one month had destroyed over 40,000 men, the flower of his army, and on this day, when Grant had declared him whipped, he added to the dread tale over 8,000 more, and so shattered the confidence of his government in Grant that gold went to the highest point it had ever reached during the war. Instead of Lee's retreating across the Chickahominy, as Grant had planned, Grant, a little over a week later, on the 12th, moved secretly by night away from Lee's front, and by a distant and roundabout route took his army to the James, which he obstructed by sinking boats in the channel above him, and then by night on the 14th moved his army across the river. His move was skilfully executed, but, though it was inspired by a constant mind and an indomitable will, it was certainly not the act of a victor. He crossed the James with the hope of capturing Petersburg by a coup, only to be again defeated by Lee, and to be held off until he had lost another 60,000 men and Lee had succumbed, not to his generalship, as determined and resourceful as he was, but to the forces which undermined the power of the Confederate Government to furnish Lee with subsistence for his army.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### LEE'S STRATEGY AND THE FIRST ATTACK ON PETERSBURG

Lee not only defeated Grant at Cold Harbor, but a little later, with Grant still before him, he did what Grant was vainly endeavoring to prevent. He sent Hampton and Fitz Lee off after Sheridan, who was marching on Charlottesville, expecting to meet Hunter there; sent Breckinridge back to the valley of Virginia to intercept Hunter; and sent Early with his corps to cut off Hunter, who was marching down the valley, his course marked by the embers of burning mansions and the evidences of such ruthless destruction that even Halleck protested. It is said that at least forty of his officers declared that they would resign before executing Hunter's orders. Moreover, before this, Lee himself assumed the offensive, and, on both the 6th and 7th of June, sent Early around to attempt a turning movement against Grant's right, which failed to attain any success mainly because of the impassable nature of the region of swamps and tangled thickets on which Burnside's right rested. "The Slashes of Hanover" were not designed for the manœuvring of troops.

The detachment of Breckinridge and Early to meet Hunter in the valley of Virginia was forced on Lee by the exigency of the situation.

On the defeat of Sigel at Newmarket by Breckinridge, General David Hunter, a Virginian by birth, with a force of some 20,000 men, after Crook and Averell joined him at Staunton, had been sent up the valley of Virginia to sweep it clean and to capture Staunton, on the Virginia Central Railway; Lynchburg, the junction point of two railways from Richmond to the South-west; and Charlottesville, the junction point of the Virginia Central Railway and the railway to Lynchburg and the South-west. Having accomplished this, Hunter was to march on down the Virginia Central Railway, destroying it as he advanced, and join the Army of the Potomac before Richmond. He had performed the first part of his grateful task. He had swept the valley clean enough to realize Grant's subsequent suggestion, quoted by Halleck, that crows flying over it for the rest of the season should be forced to carry their provender.[1] He had defeated, on June 5, at Piedmont, a dozen miles north of Staunton, a force consisting of Jones's, Vaughan's, and Imboden's Brigades, the gallant Jones being killed in the engagement; he had captured Staunton, and learning that Breckinridge with the force which he had defeated at Piedmont was posted at Waynesboro guarding the gap in the Blue Ridge on the road to Charlottesville, he had marched on toward Lynchburg through Lexington, where he had burned the Virginia Military Institute (the institution where Stonewall Jackson taught before the war), the professors' houses, and the mansion of Governor Letcher, and he was now supposed to be on his victorious and blaz-

[1] War Records, series I, vol. XXXVII, part 2, p. 366.

ing way to Charlottesville en route to Richmond. Lee determined to stop this fiery progress. Accordingly he first sent Breckinridge back to the valley and then, learning that Sheridan had been sent to meet Hunter and aid in the destruction of the Virginia Central Railway toward Charlottesville, he, on the 8th of June, sent after him Hampton's and Fitz Lee's cavalry divisions; and on the 12th of June he ordered Early to follow Hunter and, if possible, destroy him and then march on Washington, as Stonewall Jackson had done in 1862. Thus, Lee, with Grant entrenched before him, had reduced his army by the 2,500 men sent with Breckinridge and 8,000 men sent with Early, besides his two cavalry divisions. It was an exhibition of serene confidence rarely equalled during the war.

It must be remembered that at this time Grant still lay in front of Lee with an army nearly if not quite double Lee's; for it was not until the night of the 12th that Grant began to withdraw his army from the trenches at Cold Harbor. One is scarcely more impressed by the exigency that called for such a sacrifice on Lee's part or the unhesitating courage with which he accepted the situation.

It should be said before leaving the matter that both Early and Hampton were completely successful in the tasks assigned them. Hampton set out after Sheridan, and intercepting him at Trevillian's Station, about ten miles from Gordonsville, fought a sharp battle with him, in which, though at first flanked and driven back with the loss of many men, he was joined by Fitz Lee, and next day drove Sheridan back, defeating him, with

a decidedly greater loss than he had himself suffered and rendering his mission completely abortive.

Early, on his part, having reached Charlottesville, embarked his corps on the cars, and at Lynchburg defeated Hunter's plan, and pursuing him, drove him, with the loss of many men, into West Virginia, after which Early was sent by Lee down the valley to threaten Washington.

On the night of the 12th of June, as darkness fell, Grant began to withdraw his troops from his lines at Cold Harbor to cross to the south side of the James, having on the 11th moved Warren's corps to the rear, to a new line of entrenchments, to cover his move. His crossing-place was so far down the river that the crossing was effected without the interruption which a more direct crossing would have provoked. It was some thirty miles below Lee's lines. The nearest crossing-point on the Chickahominy was fifteen miles below Cold Harbor, the most distant twenty-four miles. Thence he marched across to the James, to cross which he constructed a pontoon bridge at Windmill Point where it was easily protected by his fleet, having sunk vessels in the channel above, opposite Butler's Bermuda Hundred entrenchments; and by means of this pontoon bridge and of ferry-boats, all his army except Smith's corps were transferred to the south side by midnight of the 16th. This corps was sent back the way it had come—by boat from the White House. His design was to effect what Butler had failed to accomplish a month before: capture Petersburg by a coup before Beauregard could be reinforced by Lee, which

he felt sure of being able to do, as it was garrisoned at the moment only by Wise's Brigade of less than 2,500 men. If he had not in mind also the possibility of seizing Richmond by a dash up the north side of the James, between that river and the Chickahominy, it was because the last month had taught him that his long-tried method was hopeless, and Lee was too alert and able to be thus passed. Certain historians of the war write as though Grant's Wilderness campaign were a great feat of generalship and a harmonious part of a comprehensive plan wisely preconceived and successfully executed as planned, resulting in the complete, if costly, destruction of Lee's army. This is far from the fact, and is due to a confusion of ideas, a portion of which had their origin in events which transpired long after Grant was forced to abandon the line on which he had proposed to fight it out if it took all summer. That Grant eventually compassed the destruction of Lee's army with the never adequately recognized aid of the navy no one would deny; but in this destruction the campaign of May, 1864, bore but a subordinate part. The destruction of Lee's army was mainly due to Grant's work after he crossed to the south side of the James, and to extraneous causes in which Grant's generalship bore a commanding part, but with which his Wilderness campaign had less to do than had the campaigns beyond the Alleghanies. Grant had sacrificed 60,000 men in a month's fighting and was only where he might have been without the loss of a man. The policy of attrition, if not created afterward, had not, up to this time at least, worked successfully. Lee's

army was still unshaken by his hammering, and had in the last battle given him the most terrible hammering he had ever received. So this was clearly not the way to capture Richmond.

Had he attempted its capture again from the north side, Lee was prepared again to fling himself between him and Richmond on that side, as later he did on the south side.

Lee knew on the morning of the 13th that Grant was crossing the Chickahominy, and he himself at once crossed to the south side, and, advancing across the White Oak Swamp, over which he had pursued McClellan, posted himself across the neck between the Chickahominy and the James, extending from White Oak Swamp to Malvern Hill, where he entrenched, covering the roads to Richmond. In front of Hill on Lee's left was Warren, with whom there was sharp fighting, resulting in his being driven from Riddell's Shop by Hill, leaving many dead and prisoners behind him.[1] In front of that portion of Lee's left where Anderson was posted was Wilson's Cavalry.

Grant's plan, however, was to keep Lee occupied on the north side of the James, and, crossing to the south side, seize Petersburg by a dash before Lee could interpose. And for this purpose General "Baldy" Smith, who had arrived at City Point from the White House with the Eighteenth Corps on the night of the 14th, was ordered to move at daylight next morning on Petersburg (the outer works guarding which were about six miles distant), his force being increased by a

[1] Lee's despatch to Beauregard, June 17.

negro division and Butler's cavalry, the whole some 17,000 men. At the same time orders were given to Hancock, who crossed the James that same night (14th), to move on Petersburg as soon as his command received their rations, and, when these were delayed, to march without rations by the nearest route, which he did. The plan was well conceived and gave abundant promise of success. But the Federal generals had not reckoned on the ability of their opponent.

The regular troops at this time (June 15) in the Petersburg trenches, besides some artillery in the redoubts, were only Wise's Brigade, 2,600 men, and Dearing's Cavalry; whatever other force was there was a home guard. The situation appeared to Grant and Meade, as it appears now to every one else, to be such that the two corps should have walked over the defensive force with ease. But so brave was the defence made when Smith and Kautz attacked the Confederate lines, and so wholesome was the respect inspired in Grant's army by their last thirty days' experience of Lee's army, that the Federal officers in charge of the movement were made to believe that a strong force confronted them, and instead of assaulting at once, sent for reinforcements and wasted the hours in reconnoissances. When at last, about sunset, the attack was made, the outer defences were carried and 16 guns and 200 prisoners were captured in them. Beauregard, being almost without troops, had appealed to Lee on the 14th for aid. Lee, however, at this time felt that he must protect Richmond against the peril of Grant's attempting to march on it on the north

side of the James, where the main portion of his army still remained. But on the morning of the 15th, Lee sent Hoke's Division back to Beauregard, from whom he had taken it on the eve of Cold Harbor. It arrived that night and took position on the lines where Wise's Brigade was posted. Its presence was worth more than could have been hoped for. The news that Lee's army was moving to Petersburg held Smith tight in his captured redans, he preferring to hold what he had to attempting to gain more and "have the troops meet disaster." But the danger was still imminent. That night Beauregard withdrew a division (Johnson's) from his Bermuda Hundred entrenchments before Butler to strengthen his lines before Petersburg, and notified Lee, who promptly moved Pickett's and Field's Divisions across the river to occupy the lines the other troops had left, which were then held only by Gracie's Brigade. These divisions arrived in time to retake the works there from Terry, who had advanced and seized them in the morning. On the 17th, when the Sixth Corps had crossed the river, Grant sent them to hold these lines; but when they arrived Beauregard held them with Pickett and Field and Gracie, and Lee had again balked him.

Much has been said of the fact that Lee did not know, as late as the afternoon of the 16th, that Grant's army had crossed to the south side of the James, and that even on the 17th he was not sure where Grant's army was. On the 15th, the Sixth Corps was still on the Peninsula in Lee's front, and the few roads leading up through the swamps and forest to the south of the Chick-

ahominy were strongly held by cavalry, so that to one who knows the country it causes less surprise that information was lacking. On Lee rested the responsibility of protecting Richmond, and though he telegraphed Beauregard that he could not "strip the north bank," he sent him troops at his need, and whatever his mystification may have been, both Richmond and Petersburg were saved.

Grant, having failed to seize Petersburg by a coup, was now resolved to capture it by assault. It was believed that the force occupying it was not large, and ample means were employed, as was considered, to secure it. Beauregard's occupied lines extended in a curve before Petersburg, at first easterly, then southerly, some five miles. Beyond his right the defences ran westwardly from the Jerusalem Plank Road to the Appomattox, about five miles; but this stretch was wholly unoccupied save by cavalry pickets. Against this line, manned for but half its length, Grant, on the 16th, flung the weight of three of his army corps (the Second, the Ninth, and the Eighteenth), capturing four redoubts, and the following morning at daylight he assaulted again, this time adding the Fifth Corps to the others. Surprising the troops in the outer trenches, who were asleep in their exhaustion, the assailants swept over the first lines. But although they carried the outer lines, they got little farther. All day long, at one point or another, along Beauregard's second line, from the Appomattox to the Norfolk Railroad, Grant's crack divisions poured out their blood, only to be kept off or driven out if they made a momentary lodgement.

When night fell, the ground in front of the Confederate lines was thick with the dead, and the defenders were piled high in the trenches; but Beauregard's lines were intact, and Lee, satisfied now that Grant could not attack Richmond from the Peninsula side, was hastening to his lieutenant's aid with the rest of the Army of Northern Virginia. That night Beauregard withdrew from the trenches he had defended so well to contract his lines, and throwing up new entrenchments several hundred yards to the rear awaited the renewal of the storm. It broke at daylight. The Second Corps, and the Ninth, were thrown against Beauregard's newly constructed defences, while the second division of the Sixth Corps and a division of the Eighteenth were held in reserve. Meade knew that the line occupied by Beauregard was hastily entrenched. Moreover, he had learned the numbers of Beauregard's force, and the assault was made with confidence. But he had not counted on the constancy of the men in those hasty entrenchments. And when the assault was made Lee had brought up Anderson's Corps and the divisions of Kershaw and Field, and Hill's Corps was on the way pushing hot-footed for the point where Grant's gallant troops were being thrown against Beauregard's steadfast lines only to be broken like the waves of the sea against the impregnable rocks. It was a repetition of Spottsylvania and Cold Harbor. All day long the assaults came, like the billows of the advancing tide, only to recede again, until, as evening fell, even the iron Grant grew weary of attempting the impossible and withdrew his shattered divisions to the shelter of his

fortifications. Meade had informed him that Lee's army had arrived, and Grant knew that his most desperate assault would be in vain. His assault on Petersburg in the first three days of his occupancy of the south side of the James had cost him over 10,500 men. And he had failed. That night Lee held the lines which substantially he held till the end, ten months later, when the gallant Army of Northern Virginia, from causes, of which Grant's persistent hammering was but one, had almost perished from the earth.

Lee knew that Grant, having failed in his direct assault, would now endeavor with his superior numbers to extend his lines westward beyond Lee's lines, with the object of not only investing Petersburg on the south, but of reaching the railways which led from Richmond south and formed the lines of communication over which supplies and troops were brought from the Southern States. Also that his first move would be to reach the Petersburg and Weldon Railroad, which running due south from Petersburg connected this city and Richmond with the Southern States and such important seaports as Wilmington and Savannah, the most essential of the ports from which blockade-running could still be successfully carried on. Accordingly, Lee was on the watch, and when, on the 21st, Grant (or Meade) sent the Ninth and Fifth Corps toward the Jerusalem Plank Road and moved the Second and Sixth Corps beyond their lines toward the Petersburg and Weldon Railway, Lee was ready for him, and as the Second Corps (now commanded by Birney, Hancock having been disabled on the 16th) marched west-

ward beyond the Sixth Corps, A. P. Hill, who had been sent down the Richmond and Weldon Railway to foil the attempt, directed Wilcox's Division against the Sixth Corps, while with Mahone's and Bradley Johnson's Divisions he fell on Birney's flank and rolled back his corps in the utmost confusion, capturing some 1,700 men, 4 guns, and several colors. The attack was completely successful; but Lee was compelled by the comparative smallness of his army to withdraw Hill again that night to his original lines, and Grant was able later to extend his lines to within a mile and a half of the railroad.

This unsuccessful attempt to seize the railway to the south was followed by an attempt to destroy it and the other roads southward by means of a cavalry raid. On the 22d of June General James H. Wilson, a gallant and enterprising officer, set out on a raid southward, crossed the Petersburg and Weldon Road, and moving toward Burkeville Junction, where the lines to Lynchburg and Danville crossed, destroyed both railways. Moving south-westwardly, he was brought to a halt at the Staunton River—the upper reach of the Roanoke—where the bridge was stoutly defended by the home guard and where a part of W. H. F. Lee's Division of cavalry attacked him in the rear. Unable to cross the river, he was forced to abandon his raid and head for the main army at Petersburg by a roundabout route. At Stony Creek, some thirty miles from Petersburg, he was attacked by Hampton, and his command was cut in two, and at Reams's Station, on the 29th, when within ten miles of Petersburg, he was caught between

Fitz Lee's command and Mahone's Division, which had been sent down the railway to cut him off. Here, nearly surrounded, he was forced to destroy his wagons and caissons and retreat southward again with his main force across the Nottaway River, while Kautz, making a sweep around in the other direction, gained the shelter of the Federal lines only after losing his guns. Two days later, after being in the saddle almost continuously, Wilson himself was able to reach shelter likewise, his total losses having been 1,500 men and 12 guns.

The commonly accepted idea of the effect of this campaign on Grant's reputation as a general at this time is one that has been taken from subsequent events and is utterly erroneous. The simple fact is that when Grant's costly failure to capture Richmond was succeeded by his costly failure to capture Petersburg, the nation was utterly staggered. So much blood and money for nothing was something that they could not accept calmly. Happily for the Union cause, Mr. Lincoln and his war secretary had flung everything into the scale for the Union, and realizing that whatever the cost might be they had in Grant a resolute fighter, they were as resolute as their general. But the country was not so undivided in its views, and Grant himself, possibly, came nearer meeting the fate of his unfortunate predecessors than is usually understood. A wail of anguish and of rage went up throughout the country. Dissensions arose among the officers of the Army of the Potomac, and crimination and recrimination went on, which did not cease till long after the war.

General W. F. Smith and General Butler became involved in a quarrel, and although Grant declared that the latter was clearly in the wrong and, at first, asked that he be relieved from active command, after a mysterious interview with Butler he retracted his request, and a short time later General "Baldy" Smith himself was relieved, while Butler was allowed to retain his active command.[1]

From this time the history of Lee and his gallant army is the history of the siege of Petersburg, with one week at the end occupied in the retreat to Appomattox. It is one of the most glorious chapters in a history which has few parallels in the records of war either for valor or fortitude. For Grant was at his best in these months of resolute and unremitting pressure and hammering with all the men and equipment that the United States could furnish, and yet Lee's army held them at bay through ten long months and until his ranks had thinned to less than one thousand men to the mile along over thirty-five miles of lines. Lee had now to defend both Richmond and Petersburg, and his lines when completed extended from White Oak Swamp near its junction with the Chickahominy, eight miles north of the James, to Hatcher's Run, where the Claiborne Road crossed it five or six miles south-west of Petersburg—the whole making thirty-seven miles, including the lines on either bank of the James at Drewry's and Chaffin's Bluffs.

Had Lee been allowed to march his army southward and unite or co-operate with Johnson's army, which

[1] Rhodes's "History of the United States," IV, p. 509, note.

was retiring before Sherman, the entire field of the war might have been changed. Sherman would certainly not have reached the sea, and the final issue of the struggle might have been different. But this plan, though suggested by some others, if not by Lee, could not be accepted by the Confederate authorities. The political consequences of the loss of Richmond and the abandonment of Virginia were too serious to be contemplated, and Lee was compelled by the exigencies of the Confederate Government to maintain the defence of Richmond while the forces of the Confederacy were destroyed in detail.

Grant, rendered more cautious than he had been hitherto by the great outcry over his terrible losses, began now to attempt the reduction of Petersburg—which is but another way of saying the reduction of Richmond—by approaches.[1]

This was precisely what McClellan had proposed to do two years previously; but the conditions were now widely different. At that time the government at Washington was in a panicky condition and distrusted McClellan as much as they feared Lee and Jackson. The defeat of the Union army in the valley of the Shenandoah was sufficient to set them to clamoring for McClellan to come to their rescue—to do something which would relieve them from their peril. Now, however, Washington was fully defended, and experience had taught them that though the glow of his campfires might light the skies above the South Mountains or flame on the hills of the upper Cumberland, Lee him-

[1] Humphreys' "Campaign in Virginia in '64 and '65," p. 247.

self could not capture it. They had learned from their general the arithmetical problem that if three men attack one, though two fall in destroying him, the third remains, and they were putting the problem to a practical test. The country was mourning over the dreadful carnage of the Wilderness battles and their yet deadlier successors of Cold Harbor and Petersburg; but the government was firm. Its reply to the cry of anguish throughout the land was to call for another draft from its inexhaustible resources of men and treasure.

Lee was under no misapprehension as to the magnitude and desperateness of the struggle before him. He knew as well as Grant the answer to the arithmetical problem which the latter was working out along his lines in his process of exchanging two men for one on the field of battle; he knew as well as Grant the inevitable result of the continued destruction of the railway lines which formed his lines of communication; he knew, as possibly no one else did, that time and time again his gallant army was within two days of starvation. Richmond was hung like a millstone about his neck, and he could not seek the as yet undevastated regions to the southward. Nor could he deal with Grant as he had dealt with McClellan, and, leaving a small force in his front, lead his army to victory against the defensive forces of Washington. Grant was far too resolute and bold for him to attempt with him the daring strategy that had won Second Manassas and recalled McClellan from the gates of Richmond. Lee had gone to the extreme of boldness in sending Early

off to stop the marching and burning of Hunter, while Grant lay within a dozen miles of Richmond, and only his knowledge of the staggering defeat he had inflicted on his bold antagonist at Cold Harbor can account for it. Now, in the face of Grant's next attack, he plans the only strategy left to him. Early had learned at Charlottesville that Hunter had burnt his way through the valley of Virginia and was now approaching Lynchburg, on the upper James. Lynchburg was his home, and its danger fired him to extraordinary activity. Putting his men on the train at Charlottesville, Early hastened to Lynchburg and reached there in time, on the 17th of June, to balk Hunter of his coveted prize and drive him out of Virginia into West Virginia. So rapid had been Early's march that he was on Hunter before the latter knew of his arrival, and Hunter's retreat was little less than a flight. On the 18th, the day Lee moved the main body of his army to the south side of the James to confront Grant in his attempt to possess himself of the southern gateway of Richmond, Lee sent a despatch to Early at Lynchburg, informing him of Grant's movement on Petersburg and directing him to "strike as quick as you can, and, if circumstances authorize, carry out the original plan." [1] This was to threaten Washington.

Early, finding Hunter gone on the morning of the 19th, pursued him into South-western Virginia, capturing, at Salem, a number of guns and caissons, and driving him at "headlong speed" beyond the mountains into the Kanawha Valley, putting him in such

[1] S. P. Lee's "Life of William N. Pendleton," p. 360.

peril that Grant sent him a despatch to "save his army" as best he could. Having thus cleared the valley of Virginia of this menace, Early turned back to carry out Lee's strategy. Passing through Lexington and Staunton, he swept down the valley straight for Washington. It was Jackson's old corps, or what remained of it, and they knew the valley of the Shenandoah as a fox knows his covert. But not even in Jackson's day, when they had earned the title of "foot cavalry," had they made much better time.

Leaving Staunton on the 28th of June, in such light-marching trim that even officers of rank were allowed to take only one extra suit of underclothing, the Second Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia was at Winchester on the 2d of July. Here Early received instructions from Lee "to remain in the lower valley until fully prepared to cross the Potomac and meanwhile to wreck the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and the canal."[1] This task he accomplished by burning the bridges and destroying the railroad to within five miles of Harper's Ferry, to the heights above which Sigel had retreated after being driven out of Martinsburg, with the loss of many valuable stores.

This strongly fortified position—Maryland Heights—commanded Harper's Ferry, and Lee's plan to relieve the pressure at Richmond did not admit of delay. So, after a demonstration against the place by Rodes and Ramseur, Early, having crossed the river at Shepherdstown, after burning such stores at Harper's Ferry as he had not been able to send back, moved on beyond the

[1] Pond's "Shenandoah Valley in 1864," p. 47.

South Mountains toward Frederick, his army passing on the way the scene of their former heroic struggle on the field of Sharpsburg.

On the morning of the 9th he was at Frederick, and that afternoon he attacked and routed General Lew Wallace at Monocacy Junction, where the latter had posted himself with some 6,000 troops to protect the important railway bridge at that point and to cover the roads to Washington and Baltimore. Having driven Wallace, with a loss of some 2,000 men, toward Baltimore, Early turned toward Washington, marching with a celerity which recalled and rivalled Stonewall Jackson. He encamped that night about four miles north of Rockville, having marched his whole army twenty miles that day, and a portion of it thirty miles.[1] By daylight next morning he was again on the march, pushing forward toward Washington, and before noon his advance guard was in sight of the dome of the Capitol. Three hours later he was in line of battle before the defences of Washington. But it was already too late to attack with his jaded force, with any hope of success, the powerful defences of the national capital manned as they were. One of his brigades (Bradley T. Johnson's) had been sent off toward Baltimore to try to release the prisoners confined at Point Lookout and to destroy the railway leading from the north, and Early's force before the capital did not exceed over 9,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry, while the forces garrisoning Washington and its immediate vicinity consisted of some 20,000 effectives,

[1] Early's report; Pond's "Shenandoah Valley in 1864," p. 67.

including 4,400 veteran reserves, who were on the afternoon of the 11th reinforced by two divisions of the Sixth Corps, under Major-General Wright, sent from Petersburg by Grant, and by a portion of the Nineteenth Corps, which had just arrived from New Orleans. A demonstration was, indeed, made against the lines running west from Fort Stevens, on the Seventh Street Road, to Rock Creek, in which the Federal skirmishers were driven into their works; but Early, having satisfied himself that the garrison of Washington had been too strongly reinforced from Virginia for him to attack with safety, after lying in front of the city, at Crystal Spring, all day of the 13th and skirmishing sharply with Getty's division, withdrew that night to Darnestown, beyond Rockville, and on the morning of the 14th, having been rejoined by his foraging parties, recrossed the Potomac at White's Ferry.

Many conjectures have been made as to whether Early could have captured Washington. A full discussion of the question is beyond the scope of this volume; but to the writer it appears now, as it appeared then to those most charged with the responsibility on either side, that had Early attempted to enter Washington he would not only have been defeated, but would probably have lost his army. The conditions that summer were peculiar. In Eastern Virginia no rain fell from the 3d of June to the 23d of July; in Maryland the conditions were substantially the same. When Early arrived in front of Washington, it was after days of forced marching through heat so exhausting that

his men fell by the wayside by hundreds, and to have entered the city it would have been necessary not only to capture defences on which the best military science of the world had been lavished, manned by a force possibly half as large again as his own, to which were added, in full time to have met him, the reinforcements of two divisions from the Sixth Corps and of one from the Nineteenth, but to march on to Washington, six miles away, through broken country well defended by these forces.

Early's own report gives his reasons for not attempting an assault, and he is borne out by the statements of all who were with him. He says: "The day [the 10th] was very hot and the roads exceedingly dusty, but we marched thirty miles. On the morning of the 11th we continued the march, but the day was so excessively hot, even at a very early hour in the morning, and the dust was so dense, that many of the men fell by the way, and it became necessary to slacken our pace. Nevertheless, when we reached the enemy's fortifications, the men were completely exhausted, and not in a condition to make an attack. . . . I determined to make an assault, but before it could be made it became apparent that the enemy had been strongly reinforced. . . . After consultation with my division commanders, I became satisfied that the assault, even if successful, would be attended with such great sacrifice as would insure the destruction of my whole force before the victory could have been made available, and if unsuccessful would necessarily have resulted in the loss of the whole force."

The capture of Washington was probably never a part of Lee's scheme when he despatched Early from Lynchburg to threaten the capital of the United States. His plan seems to have been to repeat the strategy of 1862, and by a menace of the national capital cause the raising of the siege of Richmond. The possibility of an attack on Washington itself probably occurred to Early first after the defeat of Lew Wallace at Monocacy Bridge.

If, however, when he recrossed the Potomac, Early's campaign in the valley of the Shenandoah had neither resulted in the capture of Washington nor in the withdrawal of Grant from before Petersburg and Richmond, it had accomplished everything else which Lee had planned, and had completely justified Lee's masterly strategy. It had cleared the valley of Virginia of Hunter's army and enabled the farmers of that fruitful land to reap their crops in peace; and it had shown the world that the idea that Lee's army was almost annihilated was so far from being sound that it could hold the combined armies of Meade and Butler at bay, drive Hunter in headlong retreat from the valley of Virginia, and, sweeping across into Maryland, could roll its drums at the very gates of the national capital. It is not too much to say that it so disheartened the North and enheartened the South that it probably prolonged the contest by six months.

It illustrated Lee's bold strategy that on the heels of a determined movement which Grant made on the north side of the James, Lee, learning that his opponent had detached cavalry and infantry to Washington, promptly

detached on his side R. H. Anderson with infantry and cavalry to observe their movements.[1] It also illustrated the desperate need of the Confederacy that he should have been compelled to weaken his army before Grant at such a time. This force, after stopping for a short time at Culpeper, joined Early and remained with him till the middle of September, when Lee, under Grant's persistent hammering, found it necessary to recall the infantry to his own aid, leaving only Fitz Lee's Cavalry along the Shenandoah.

[1] Lee's despatch to Early, August 8.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE SIEGE OF PETERSBURG AND RICHMOND

The remainder of the Petersburg campaign, though forming one of the most glorious chapters in the title to renown of Lee and of the Army of Northern Virginia, was, in the words of the President of the Confederacy, "too sad to be patiently considered." Locked in his fortifications, with Richmond hung like a millstone about his neck, while the South was cut off piecemeal from possibility of contributing to his support, and his gallant army, like an overused blade, was being worn to a shadow by the attrition of continued battling, Lee, faithful to his trust, and obedient to the laws, put aside whatever personal views he might have held and continued to handle the situation with supreme skill. Before that army succumbed it had added to Grant's casualty list from the time he crossed the James another sixty-odd thousand men, thus doubling the ghastly record of his losses.

It is curious to note from the records of the time how utterly dependent the two contesting governments were on their commanding generals. Halleck's despatches to Grant from the Union War Office display an almost pitiful dependence on Grant. Again and again he writes assuring him that he "awaits his instructions." On the 4th of August he notifies him that he can give no instruction to Hunter or Sheridan till Grant decides

on their commands. "I await your orders," he adds, "and shall strictly carry them out, whatever they may be." And, indeed, Grant appears to be the one firm, clear-headed, practical man in all the muddle of conflicting ambitions and confused orders. "This man Grant grows on me," Mr. Lincoln had said a year or more before—"he fights." It was the one solution of the problem—to fight and keep on, no matter at what cost, till the other side should be exhausted. Grant recognized it and acted on it. Happily for the Union cause, Grant was the commanding general of all the armies of the Union. Unhappily for the Confederate cause, Lee had not been given similar power. As dependent as was the cause of the South on his genius, the military command was still reserved in the hands of the civil authorities. He could not even appoint his chief of staff.

Lee's strategy in despatching Early against Washington gave him relief for some time, and deferred for months the seizure of Petersburg.

The detachment of the Sixth Corps from the Army of the Potomac to defend Washington forced Grant to withdraw his left to the Jerusalem Plank Road from the position formerly occupied, menacing the Petersburg and Weldon Railroad. Instead, therefore, of Grant's cutting the railway by which Lee received supplies, Lee was now cutting the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Early's cavalry raiders were threatening the Cumberland Valley, while his main body lay just beyond the Potomac. Chaos reigned about Washington, and early in August, after suggesting Franklin, Meade, and

one or two other commanders for the somewhat disorganized forces guarding the capital, Grant sent his young and energetic chief of cavalry, General Philip H. Sheridan, to take over the command in that region. A discussion of the remainder of Early's campaign in detail is not within the proper scope of this volume.

Sheridan's army, with the Sixth and Nineteenth Corps and General Crook's force, known as "The Army of West Virginia," numbered, present for duty on September 10, including Averell's cavalry, 48,000 troops. Early had at Winchester 14,000. After holding Sheridan in check for many weeks, Early was defeated by him at Winchester on September 19, and was again attacked and defeated at Fisher's Hill on the 22d, Sheridan outnumbering him on each occasion nearly three to one. Being reinforced by Kershaw's Division, Cutshaw's Artillery, and Rosser's Cavalry, Early now assumed the offensive, and advanced against Sheridan, who retired to Cedar Creek. Here Early, on October 19, surprised and at first defeated his army, capturing his camp; but instead of pursuing his advantage, he allowed his men to get out of hand, and while they were looting the captured camp, Sheridan rallied his men, and attacking in turn, completely defeated him, and almost destroyed his army. Meantime, Grant made a determined and threatening effort to possess himself of both Richmond and Petersburg by a bold and secret expedient. His lines on the north side of the James extended, as has been stated, across the Peninsula between the James and the Chickahominy, to within some seven or eight miles of Richmond, the lines on either side of the

James being connected by his pontoon bridges, so situated that he could readily transfer his forces from one side to the other as he desired with both secrecy and despatch. His plan now was to transfer secretly the Second Corps and his cavalry to the north side of the James and to make a concerted attempt to seize Richmond on that side at the same time that he attempted to break through Lee's lines before Petersburg. It had been suggested by General Potter, the commander of one of his Pennsylvania brigades, composed largely of miners, that his men could run a mine under one of Lee's forts and blow it up. Accordingly, in preparation for the assault at Petersburg, mining operations had been going on for a month between the lines, the objective point being what was known as Elliott's Salient, a point some two hundred yards in front of Burnside's corps, to the east of Petersburg. The mine had been discovered on the Southern side, and some effort had been made at countermining; but this had been abandoned and entrenchments had been thrown up across "the gorge of the Salient, at which the mine was apparently directed." It had even been intimated in the press that this mine was being run. The mine was ready on the 23d or 24th of July, and just before exploding it, an attempt at an assault was made on the north side of the James, as stated, to compel Lee to thin his lines before Petersburg. Lee was not misled by it, as has been supposed; but it was necessary to meet the movement.[1] On the night of the 26th of July Hancock's corps, supported

[1] Letter of General William N. Pendleton, July 29, 1864. (S. P. Lee's "Life of William N. Pendleton," p. 355.)

by Sheridan's cavalry, was sent secretly across the pontoon bridges at Deep Bottom, twelve miles below Richmond, and turning up the river, made a determined attack on Lee's left. It was hoped by Grant that while his infantry engaged such forces as Lee might have at Chaffin's Bluff, his cavalry might be able to dash into Richmond. Lee, however, was ready for them. As though he had read Grant's mind, he had despatched Wilcox and Kershaw to the north side "before the movement began," and on the 27th Heth's Division joined them. Thus, when the assault was made it was promptly repulsed, and on the night of the 29th, this coup having failed, Hancock and Sheridan both recrossed the river to take part in the capture of Petersburg, which was set for the following day. Everything was got ready for the assault, and it appeared to the Union commander as though the fall of Petersburg, as a result of his elaborate preparations, were a foregone conclusion. His movement against Lee's extreme left had taken from before Petersburg two of Longstreet's Divisions (Field's and Kershaw's), two of Hill's Divisions (Heth's and Wilcox's), and the cavalry divisions of the two Lees, and Lee now had left before Petersburg only Hoke's, Johnson's, and Mahone's Divisions—not a very strong force, certainly; but it served. Against these thin lines were massed, in the hours of darkness on the night of the 29th, Grant's great army. All arrangements were made carefully. The mine was charged; the fuses laid; the heavy guns and mortars were got in position to cover the assault and to sweep the open space beyond the doomed Salient, to prevent

the approach of fresh defenders. The night was spent in massing troops for the assault and in clearing away the abatis to make ready for the passage and charge of the troops; the pioneers were marshalled with their axes and entrenching tools, and everything was prepared for the rush forward as soon as the explosion should occur. The time set for this was the first crack of dawn. Burnside, Warren, Ord, and Hancock were all in place—the major portion of their corps massed to rush forward and overwhelm the defenders' thin line. A delay occurred; the first fuse did not burn and it was nearly two hours before another could be lighted. The explosion, however, when it occurred was a complete success; the undermined redan was blown up, carrying a battery and nearly two companies to destruction and shocking the men in the trenches on either side for a considerable distance. A huge crater yawned in Lee's lines where one of his strongest forts had frowned. Promptly the assailing force poured out of their breastworks and rushed forward into the great gap opened in Lee's lines. It proved a death-trap. The huge yawning pit was nearly a hundred yards long and was sixty feet wide and twenty-five feet deep, and into this cul-de-sac poured the leading troops of Burnside, so that in a little time the troops were huddled together in much confusion. Other regiments being pushed forward obliqued to the right and left and captured a part of the lines on either side; but the delay had enabled the startled Confederates to regain their bearings, and by the time the Federals undertook to reach the crest beyond the crater the

Confederate batteries were sweeping the open space which lay before it, and two of Mahone's Brigades (Weiseger's and Wright's), who had been hastily summoned by Lee on learning of the explosion, were filing down the covered ways, ready to contest every foot of ground. Elliott's men, driven from the outer line by the shock of the explosion and the onsweep of Burnside's troops, had made a stand under cover of a ravine and had held back the advance until succor arrived, and now Lee himself had reached the field with Beauregard and assumed charge of the operations. As Wright's Brigade was moving into position, Ferrero's division of negro troops, who had been drawn out to make the assault in the first instance, but had been set aside for another division of Burnside's, were forced forward from the first line of captured entrenchments, where they had sheltered themselves from the terrible fire that was now sweeping the open space, and were ordered to carry the crest beyond. Pushed forward, they passed through the troops lying down to shield themselves and advanced up the slope. The presence of negro troops always infuriated the Southerners and redoubled their determination. So now the knowledge that negro troops were being used in the assault spurred every gray-clad soldier to put forth his utmost might. As Ferrero's black regiments advanced, Weiseger's and Elliott's men broke from their cover and dashed upon them in a counter charge so furious that they suddenly turned tail and fled for their lives to their own works or piled pell-mell into the crater as a place of refuge, sweeping away with them in their flight most, if not all,

of the troops about the crater. By half-past nine all chance of the capture of Petersburg by this coup had passed and the Federal generals were concerned only to save their men who were huddled in the crater or a section of the trenches to the south of that death-trap. Warren, who had been ordered by Grant to put his men in, but had reported that it would be a useless waste of life, as the opportunity had passed, was now ordered to make an attack toward Lee's right. But this, too, he found impracticable, a difference of opinion that was to cost him dear later on. Lee was now bending his energies to repair the break in his defences, and Mahone, after three assaults, carried the captured lines and drove out or captured all the troops left in the crater or the lines that had been broken. Among the captured in the crater was the gallant Brigadier-General William F. Bartlett, bravest of the brave, who was after the war to endear himself as much to his foes of the war time as he had previously done to his comrades on his own side.

The day ended with a loss of some 4,000 men added to Grant's ever-increasing list, while Lee's losses were less than a third of that number, mainly among Elliott's and Mahone's gallant brigades, who had done such yeomen's service. On the 1st of August Grant asked for an armistice to bury his dead, who lay in piles in and about the crater, and from five till nine on the 2d there was for the first time no firing along the lines about Petersburg, and many officers gathered from each side to see the effect of the strange attempt which had so nearly succeeded and so disastrously failed.

It is said that the negro troops had been given to singing over their camp-fires during the weeks of preparation a sort of chant with a refrain ending,

"For we are mighty men of war,"

but after the catastrophe of the crater they were never known to sing it again.

When Grant learned that Lee had sent away so important a part of his army as that which Anderson had taken to the Shenandoah Valley, he promptly proceeded to take advantage of the weakening of Lee's lines. Thus, while Lee had been compelled to weaken his own forces to strengthen Early in the valley of Virginia, he was obliged to withstand the renewed shocks against his lines which this detachment of troops called forth. But, as before, Lee's sleepless vigilance forestalled him. The first attempt made was against Lee's left, on the north side of the James. It was substantially a repetition of the attempt of July 26. Hancock's corps, and a part of the Tenth Corps, commanded by Birney, supported by Gregg's cavalry, were sent secretly to the north side of the James. On August 14 the infantry body embarked on boats with much ostentation, as if intended for Washington. Disembarking a little lower down the river on the north bank, they were marched up the James and a sudden attack was made on Lee's lines in the expectation of surprising them. The plan was that, while Gregg's cavalry should turn the left flank, the infantry was to assault and capture the lines, including Chaffin's Bluff, one of the chief defences of Richmond. Field and Wilcox, however, were on guard,

the former at Deep Bottom, the latter at Chaffin's Bluff, and though, by reason of the thinning of the Confederate right to strengthen the left against the attack of Barlow's divisions, Birney was able to gain a temporary advantage and seize a part of the line, capturing four guns, Lee soon had a sufficient force on the ground to repel the movement. Mahone's Division with Hampton's and W. H. F. Lee's Cavalry Divisions were rushed across the river from Petersburg, and when Hancock, Birney, and Gregg attacked, on the morning of the 16th, along the Darbytown and Charles City Roads, though again they had a temporary success and captured between 200 and 300 prisoners and three stands of colors, they were ultimately repulsed with heavy loss and were driven back all along the line. For several days following this the skirmishing continued on the north side; but on the night of the 20th, the attempt on Richmond having been frustrated, Grant withdrew his troops again to the Petersburg lines, having lost in this attempt on Richmond 2,786 men.[1]

Meantime, Lee had to guard his extreme right to the south of Petersburg no less than his extreme left to the east of Richmond, thirty miles away, and here too he was able to repel Grant's assault. Grant's superiority in numbers gave him the power to attack both sides of Lee's extended lines at will. Accordingly, while the Second and Tenth Corps were operating directly against Richmond, he and Meade were planning to turn Lee's right also. Hoping to cut and, possibly,

[1] Humphreys' "Campaign in Virginia in '64 and '65," p. 272.

to secure permanent possession of the two railway lines connecting Petersburg and Richmond with the Carolinas and the far South, and figuring that, at least, he could compel Lee to recall Anderson from the Shenandoah Valley and thus weaken Early, who was still holding Washington and Western Maryland and Pennsylvania in terror, though Sheridan was now on hand to protect them, Grant, on the 18th of August, sent Warren with the Fifth Corps, and Parke with the Ninth Corps, or a good part of it, around Lee's right to seize the Petersburg and Weldon Railway within a few miles of Petersburg. "In addition to the destruction of the road, he was to consider the movement a reconnoissance in force and take advantage of any weakness the enemy might betray." The enemy betrayed some "weakness," but in numbers only. Warren's corps, with three divisions of the Ninth Corps, was, indeed, able to strike the Petersburg and Weldon Railway at a point some three miles beyond Grant's left, having only Dearing's Cavalry Brigade opposed to their advance; but a few hours later, Heth, sent by Lee with two divisions, swept down on them, and though they were eventually driven back, Warren reported that night losses numbering 936 men. Lee met the situation, as usual, with promptness. Recalling Mahone's and Lee's Divisions from before Richmond, where Hancock still lay at Deep Bottom, he sent them against Warren where his right was stretched thin, while A. P. Hill attacked his centre and left. Breaking through to Warren's right, Mahone's Divisions rolled up Crawford's division on this wing until it came on his strongly posted centre, when they

were driven back in turn. But Warren's losses that day were 2,900 men, and that night Warren fell back a mile or more and entrenched. Lee was under the necessity of preserving the railway which had thus been attacked, and for this purpose he began to mass his forces as Grant was massing his to resist him. Wilcox was brought over to the south side, and on the 21st two of Field's brigades and Butler's brigade of cavalry were transferred to Lee's left. A. P. Hill was sent to assault Warren's right; but the latter was too firmly established to be dislodged. That afternoon an attack was made on Warren's left along the railway by Mahone's Division; but equally without success. And Hagood's Brigade, having pushed gallantly forward, was almost surrounded and cut off. Meantime, Grant had ordered Hancock back from before Richmond to support Warren on his left, thus extended, and the space covered in his recent flank movement was heavily fortified from the Jerusalem Plank Road to the railway, a stretch of several miles. Lee was too dependent on this line to tolerate its loss if it could be prevented and he made his dispositions accordingly. On the evening of the 24th he sent A. P. Hill with his corps, a brigade of Longstreet's Corps (Anderson's), and Lee's Cavalry around Warren's left to interpose between him and Hancock at Reams's Station, ten miles south of Petersburg. On the afternoon of the following day they assaulted Hancock, who was posted in a fortified position extending along the railway with both wings refused, and after a spirited engagement carried the position, capturing "12 stands of colors, 9 guns, 10 caissons, 2,150 prisoners,

3,100 stands of small arms," and forcing Hancock to retreat under cover of night to avoid further disaster. Hill's own losses were reported by him to be 720 men, while Hancock's were 2,372. Still Lee was unable because of the superiority of Grant's numbers to dislodge him from his main fortified lines, which were gradually stretching westward, and he found it necessary to recall Anderson from the valley of the Shenandoah to help him withstand the resistless tide that was gradually sweeping away his resources and annihilating his army.[1] His enforced recall left Early alone to confront Sheridan's army of thrice his numbers.

Anderson's Divisions were brought back toward the latter part of September, and the exigency was great; for Grant was steadily attempting to break through first on one side of the James and then on the other.

The next serious attempt which had to be met was at the end of September, on the north side of the James, where the lines still remained denuded. Grant sent by night the Eighteenth Corps (now under Ord) and the Tenth Corps (now under Birney) to the north side of the James to repeat the experiment of August, while at the same time Meade made a demonstration against Lee's right. Ord was to attack and capture Chaffin's Bluff and the forts connected therewith, while the Tenth Corps was to advance by the more northerly roads against the left of the Confederate lines. Lee was, however, no more taken by surprise than before.

[1] The Confederate losses in these movements are not given with any accuracy, but are assumed by Alexander and others to be approximately proportioned to the Union losses according to the number of troops engaged.

He promptly withdrew troops from his right to reinforce Ewell, who now commanded on the north side of the James, and though Fort Harrison was captured by Ord, Fort Gilmer, which lay nearer to and protected Chaffin's Bluff, was firmly held and the enemy was repulsed with heavy loss. Lee and Grant were both on the ground in this engagement, and the fighting, which was under their immediate supervision, was costly to both sides. On the Southern side the losses were some 2,000 men, while on the Union side they were reported at 2,272. At the same time Meade attacked Lee's right where Hill commanded, Beauregard having gone south to meet the exigencies there. With the design of capturing the entrenchments along the Boydton Road and the South-side Railroad, General Parke and General Warren were, on the 30th, thrown against these lines and captured a portion of the outer entrenchments; but in the end they were repulsed with losses stated at over 2,000 men, and were content to extend their own entrenchments farther to the westward.

Still the Federal losses, though staggering, were steadily made up by the ever-renewed reinforcements. The bounties for enlistment in the North—county, State, and Federal—amounted now to so large a sum—over $1,500 in some States—that a new profession was created: that of the "bounty-jumper," and while this class of soldier was ever ready to desert if occasion presented itself, he made "food for powder," and filled in the gaps between the brave and the patriotic. The contingent of mercenaries grew ever larger and larger, and Northern historians state as one of the reasons of

Grant's continued failure to break through Lee's lines—the loss of the flower of his army on so many fatal fields. Hancock attributed his defeat at Reams's Station on the 25th of August mainly to his "heavy losses during the campaign, especially officers," and says that "there were several regiments largely made up of recruits and substitutes. One, General Hancock mentions particularly, as being entirely new, and some of its officers unable to speak English."[1]

The remainder of the siege of Petersburg was like the beginning, save that Lee's lines steadily grew thinner under the wasting of battle and famine and sickness, while his opponent's lines as steadily refilled. Confident of being able to replenish his ranks, Grant's tactics were a repetition of those of the autumn—to attack now one wing and now the other of Lee's extended lines, in the assurance that in time they would be worn thin enough to break somewhere. This he was enabled to do with his preponderant numbers, and his line across the James, by leaving enough men on one side of the James to hold one wing and marching a large force under cover of night to the other side to attack the other wing. Lee's part was to hold his lines in obedience to orders, and, if possible, break through Grant's line if an opening were presented.

Thus, on the 6th of October, Hoke and Field were withdrawn from before Petersburg and sent to the Richmond side to recover the entrenchments across the Darbytown Road lost in the engagement of September 29. This they accomplished, flanking and driv-

[1] Humphreys' "Virginia Campaign of '64 and '65," p. 283.

ing Kautz therefrom across White Oak Swamp, with a loss of over 300 men and 8 of his guns.

On the 13th of October an assault made on Lee's left before Richmond by the Tenth Corps of Grant's army was repulsed without great loss on either side. And for some ten days there was an intermission of the assaults, though the daily skirmishing went on as before, varied by the nightly bombardment from the mortars and siege guns.

A fortnight later Lee had to meet a yet more determined attempt to cut him off from the south and, if possible, turn his right. Grant undertook to attack both of Lee's wings at the same time, the serious effort being made against Lee's right with three army corps, while Butler attacked Lee's left, in front of Richmond. With this in view, on October 27, Meade, in pursuance of Grant's orders, attempted to move westward across Lee's right and seize the South-side Railroad. He was to leave enough men in front of Lee's centre to hold their lines and with three corps —some forty-odd thousand men—make the flank movement. Parke, with the Ninth Corps (Burnside's old command), was to move next Lee's lines, surprise his incomplete entrenchments on his right, and contain him until Hancock and Warren should have marched beyond Lee's right and seized the South-side Railroad, when Parke was to attack in unison with the other two corps. It was a formidable movement, and under Meade's careful hand it started like clockwork. But Lee was ready, as ever. When Parke and Warren reached the ground where they were to surprise Lee's

unfinished entrenchments, they found them not only sufficiently completed, but sufficiently manned to withstand the assault, and Grant and Meade having both come on the field, Warren was sent westward to support Hancock, who was pushing forward beyond Hatcher's Run toward Lee's extreme right. But so difficult was the ground, so dense the undergrowth, and so cleverly were Lee's defences constructed, that it took four hours for the advancing troops to move a mile and a half, and it was four o'clock in the afternoon before Warren's advance brigades could be abreast of Hancock, who had halted at the Boydton Plank Road to await his aid. Meantime, while Wilcox alone was left to hold the entrenchments threatened by Parke, the divisions of Heth and Mahone had been sent forward by Lee to meet this threatening advance and, with Hampton's Cavalry, were now, not awaiting an attack, but making one—Hampton on Hancock's left flank, Heth in his front, and Mahone moving silently by a wood-road to flank his right. As Egan's division of Hancock's corps was attempting to carry the bridge across Hatcher's Run, Mahone, who had passed through an interval between Hancock's right and Warren, "broke out of the woods" on Hancock's right and sweeping away Peirce's brigade, which had been sent to hold this part of Hancock's line, pushed forward, while Hampton, on the other side, attacked so hotly his left flank, where lay Gregg's cavalry dismounted, that Hancock brought Egan back from the bridge to help withstand Mahone's furious attack. With these reinforcements Hancock was able to flank in turn, and Mahone was driven back

into the woods with the loss of two stands of colors and several hundred prisoners. But on his side he had to show as spoils three stands of colors, four hundred prisoners, and six pieces of artillery, which he spiked, being unable to get them across the stream, as the enemy held the bridge. Moreover, the Confederates had to their account the complete defeat of Grant's well-laid scheme to seize the South-side Railroad; for that night the Federals retreated under cover of darkness to their original positions, leaving their dead and 250 wounded on the field, their total loss having been over 1,400 men.

On the same day Butler attacked Lee's left before Richmond, where Longstreet, who had recovered from his wound of the Wilderness and returned to his command on October 19, now had charge. With Hoke's and Field's Divisions, the "Local Defences," or Home Guard, and Gary's Cavalry, Longstreet met and repulsed the assaults made along his lines by Butler, driving the Federals back and capturing nine colors and several hundred prisoners. In this attempt the Federal loss was over 1,100 men, while the Confederate loss was comparatively light. Thus, the total Federal loss of the day in both the attacks was over 2,500 men—so effective even at this late stage was the depleted Army of Northern Virginia. This repulse appears to have satisfied Grant that, for the present at least, even "persistent hammering" did not give the expected results, and though, as transpired later, the attrition was wearing away Lee's army with deadly effect, up to this time it appeared mainly to have worn the Army of the Poto-

mac. Thus the hammering was for the time being suspended.

The losses of Lee's army are not known with any accuracy, though they were heavy enough to deplete the South; but the losses of Grant's army were enough to show what a powerful weapon Lee had wielded and with what masterly skill. The Army of Northern Virginia in December, 1864, numbered some 50,000 effectives. On the 7th of November the medical director of the Army of the Potomac reported to General Meade that "the number of wounded of the Army of the Potomac from May 3 to October 31, 1864, may be considered as amounting to 57,495." "This," says Humphreys, "was exclusive of the Eighteenth Corps while it served with the Army of the Potomac, and does not include the Ninth Corps at the Wilderness and Spottsylvania." Nor does it include the dead or the missing. Nearly 100,000 men had Lee's army destroyed in these six months.

Unfortunately for Lee, the attrition went on in other ways continuously. Early had, as stated, been decisively defeated at Cedar Creek by Sheridan on October 19, and his subsequent final defeat at Waynesboro substantially destroyed his force in the valley of Virginia, leaving that region at the mercy of Sheridan, and enabling the Sixth Corps to be sent back to swell Grant's ranks before Petersburg. Sheridan swept up the valley to Staunton, thence to Charlottesville, and Gordonsville, the object of so many futile movements. From there he crossed over to the James at Columbia, destroying the canal to Lynchburg, and having thus cut up Lee's two lines of supply, he passed on down through

Goochland and Hanover and rejoined Grant on the 27th of March in time to take a prominent part in the final act of the drama which ended at Appomattox.

But other causes than Grant's persistent hammering were now wearing away Lee's army. Cut off from supplies of almost every kind on nearly every side, grim famine and its grisly sister, disease, were slowly wasting what battle had spared. The condition can hardly be better set forth than in the statement of the careful and patient historian of the Virginia campaign of 1864–65, whose account has been mainly followed in this chapter. He says: "The winter of 1864–65 was one of unusual severity, making the picket duty in front of the entrenchments very severe. It was especially so to the Confederate troops with their threadbare, insufficient clothing and meagre food, chiefly corn bread made of the coarsest meal. Meat they had but little of, and their Subsistence Department was actually importing it from abroad. Of coffee or tea or sugar they had none, except in the hospitals.

"It is stated that in a secret session of the Confederate Congress, the condition of the Confederacy as to subsistence was declared to be:

"'That there was not meat enough in the Southern Confederacy for the armies it had in the field.

"'That there was not in Virginia either meat or bread for the armies within her limits.

"'That the supply of bread for those armies to be obtained from other places depended absolutely upon keeping open the railroad connections with the South.

"'That the meat must be obtained from abroad through a seaport.

"'That the transportation was not adequate, from whatever cause, to meet the necessary demands of the service.

"'That the supply of fresh meat to General Lee's army was precarious, and, if the army fell back from Richmond and Petersburg, that there was every probability that it would cease altogether.'"

The bald statement of these facts gives little idea of the condition within the Confederate lines. The region about the armies was absolutely denuded of food and the men in the trenches not only starved themselves, but underwent the additional pangs of knowing that their families were starving at home.

These facts were as well known in the Union camp as in the Confederate, and Grant's objective now was far more the lines of supply than the lines of breastwork behind which Lee's ragged and shivering veterans, wasting away as they were, still proved too deadly to be inconsiderately attacked. So constant was the firing across the lines that no wagons could approach the front to bring fuel, and the ill-clad Southern soldiers were compelled to resort to the desperate expedient of burning the abatis in their front to keep from freezing. In consequence, when the final assaults came their lines had been weakened in many places, without as well as within the entrenchments. Numbers of them froze to death at their posts, and of those who remained, the entire body was so enfeebled as scarcely to be able to stand the fatigue of the retreat, and many of them dropped by the wayside in exhaustion.

## CHAPTER XX

### LEE AND GRANT

Necessarily a comparison arises between the two captains who confronted each other in this great campaign of 1864. But the exalting of the one does not necessarily mean the depreciation of the other. To argue that Grant was not as great a soldier as Lee does not reflect on him. No more were Jackson or Johnston. Lee excelled them all.

Grant's fame, when he was made lieutenant-general and came into Virginia, rested on the three great feats of Donelson, Vicksburg, and Missionary Ridge. And to these three a fourth was added a year later, when at Appomattox, Lee, on the 9th of April, 1865, surrendered to him the starving remnant of the Army of Northern Virginia, which the exigencies of the Confederacy had held before Petersburg as in a vise till it had slowly shrunken to a shadow. Current history has chosen to assign to Grant the greater praise for this last campaign, partly because he finally crushed Lee, but chiefly because it ended the war. And possibly the lasting fame of the successful captain will be based chiefly on this. As a man, it should be based on this; for no victor in all history ever displayed nobler qualities than those which Grant showed when Lee asked him for terms. It may be well, however, to recall the simple but often

overlooked principle, that while success is without doubt the gauge of a general's ability, this does not necessarily mean final success. History shines with the names of generals who have failed at last and have yet borne off the palm in the great contest in which Fame is the reward. Hannibal was not the less the superior of Scipio Africanus because the latter finally conquered him and saved Rome. Charles XII was not the less a greater captain than Peter's forgotten general because the latter drove him from Russia to seek an asylum in Turkey. Nor was Napoleon inferior to Wellington though he died defeated and a prisoner, while Wellington became prime minister and first citizen of the England he had been so capable and fortunate as to save.

A captain's rank must be measured by his opportunities and the manner in which he uses them. That Grant was a general of rare ability—clear-headed, capable, far-sighted, single-minded, prompt, resourceful, constant, resolute even to obstinacy—no one who studies his campaigns will deny; that he was the equal of Lee in that high combination of these and other rarer qualities which go to make up the greatest soldier, no one who studies with open mind the campaign of 1864 may successfully maintain.

The heroic manner in which Lee with his half-starved veterans sustained the repeated shocks of the "persistent hammering" of Grant's great army through so long a period must ever be a cause of wonder to the true student of history, and the key will only be found by him who, looking beyond mere natural forces, shall

consider the inspiration that, springing from love of country, and nourished by love of liberty, animates the breast of those who, firm in their conviction of right, fight on their own soil for their homes and their firesides. Study of the subject has, at least, convinced one writer, who has desired to give the truth, and nothing but the truth, that rarely if ever has there been such an army led by such a leader. Grant's persistent hammering, as attritive as it was, was far less so than the attrition of hunger and want. Lee, who early in the war had sighed for a force of veteran troops to whom to confide the trust, had long been at the head of the most experienced veterans who ever fought on American soil. He believed in his soul that they would go anywhere when properly led. But he was too clear-eyed a soldier not to know that the most veteran legions that ever followed the eagles of Rome or France or the flag of the Confederacy must be shod and fed or they could not fight. From the first there had been difficulty in the equipment of the troops, owing to the absence of manufactories of even elementary articles. The arms with which the South entered the war were largely of the oldest and most obsolete kind; and many troops were armed with old muskets roughly changed from flintlocks to percussion; saddles were wanting to the cavalry, and swords were made on country forges.[1] Artillery had to be mounted on farm wagons,[2] and uniforms were woven on country looms. The ordnance department was created, said General Johnston, out of

[1] "Life of Forrest," by Dr. John A. Wyeth.
[2] "Life of William N. Pendleton," by S. P. Lee.

nothing. This deficiency was in time partially overcome by captures from the enemy; by building up hastily manufacturing establishments at a number of points, and by blockade-running; but the matter of subsistence of the army was one which always caused grave alarm and serious and, at last, fatal trouble. The means of transportation were so limited that any break in even one line of railway was a perilous loss and the absence of manufactories contributed to frustrate Lee's boldest designs.

In the history of war it has ever pleased the romantic to find the commander sharing with his soldiers whatever hardships the campaign might bring. No captain ever measured up to this standard more fully than General Lee. The world has little conception of the scarcity among the Confederate soldiery of the commonest necessaries of life. They were scarce from the beginning. Often shirts were made from curtains, for blankets were substituted squares of old carpet, shoes were made of rawhide, and uniforms of cotton. Medicine was made contraband of war by the Federal Government, and quinine and chloroform were as rigidly excluded as percussion caps and powder. After the middle of the war, except when they were in the enemy's country and could secure supplies, the army rarely had enough, often had the least that men can subsist on; at times had nothing. "Shoes were scarce, blankets were curiosities, and overcoats phenomena," writes a careful Northern student of the war.[1] This was nothing new.

"The troops of this portion of the army have for

[1] "The Campaign of Chancellorsville," p. 33 (Bigelow).

some time been confined to reduced rations," wrote Lee to the Confederate Secretary of War in 1863. ". . . Symptoms of scurvy are appearing among them, and to supply the place of vegetables each regiment is directed to send a daily detail to gather sassafras buds, wild onion, garlic, lamb's quarters, and poke sprouts; but for so large an army the supply obtained is very small." [1]

It is tragic to think of being dependant for the supply of any army on the wild vegetables that could be found in the March woods and fields. No more unconscious or more damning indictment was ever framed against a commissariat. He had already written to Mr. Seddon ten days before on the same subject, and he now again is urging the necessity of a "more generous diet" for his men, not because of their dissatisfaction, for, said he, "the men are cheerful and I receive but few complaints, still I do not think it is enough to continue them in health and vigor, and I fear they will not be able to endure the hardships of the approaching campaign."

In his letter of March 17, he wrote: ". . . I am informed by the chief commissary of the army that he has been unable to issue the sugar ration to the troops for the last ten days. Their ration consequently consists of one-fourth pound of bacon, eighteen ounces of flour, ten pounds of rice to each one hundred men about every third day, with some few peas and a small amount of dried fruit occasionally as they can be obtained. This may give existence to the troops while idle, but

[1] Letter of March 27, 1863.

will certainly cause them to break down when called upon for exertion. . . . The time has come when it is necessary that the men should have full rations. Their health is failing, scurvy and typhus fever are making their appearance, and it is necessary for them to have a more generous diet."

It was on this fare that the army was kept who fought the battle of Chancellorsville, and, for that matter, it was on less than this that they withstood Grant's tremendous assaults, fought the battles of the Wilderness campaign, and held the lines before Richmond and Petersburg.

But whatever the hardships of his soldiers were, Lee shared them. Many stories were told, by those who had opportunities to know, of the meagreness of his own table. He himself told of the hen which had made her home throughout the campaign in his headquarters wagon and had inexplicably disappeared. On inquiry it turned out that some stranger had been invited to dinner, and his servant, ashamed to have the visitor see how little they had to eat at the general's table, had killed the hen and served her at dinner.

Another story used to be told which, though perhaps not having so high authority, was generally accepted as authentic. It is said that the general on one occasion, finding his meal to consist only of cabbage, questioned his servant on the subject, and on being informed that there was no bacon, asked what became of a piece of bacon which had been on the table the day before when they had had a guest. "That was borrered bacon, sir," said the servant.

We have seen how at Sharpsburg the want of shoes prevented his meeting McClellan with his full force. Want of supplies held him in Virginia later, when strategy appeared to demand his again invading Maryland. A few extracts from Lee's letters at the time will show the situation plainly. In October, 1863, after Gettysburg, Lee writes of his troops: "If they had been properly provided with clothes I would certainly have endeavored to have thrown them north of the Potomac; but thousands were barefooted; thousands with fragments of shoes, and all without coats, blankets, or warm clothing. I could not bear to expose them to certain suffering on an uncertain issue." [1]

On October 28 he writes to his wife: "I am glad you have some socks for the army. Send them to me. Tell the girls to send all they can. I wish they could make some shoes, too. We have thousands of barefooted men. There is no news. General Meade, I believe, is repairing the railroads and I presume will come on again. If I could only get some shoes and clothes for the men I would save him the trouble."

Could anything be more tragic than this general bound in his trenches by the nakedness of his army, while his opponent prepared in his sight to overwhelm him! Or could anything be more pathetic than this general of an army acting as receiver of a few dozen pairs of socks knitted for his barefooted army by his invalid wife! Not merely here, but from now on, he acts as dispenser of the socks knitted by her busy needles. Truly, the South may well point

[1] Letter to Mrs. Lee, October 19, 1863.

with pride to her gifted son, who in his head-quarters in a "nice pine thicket" showed such antique simplicity of character.

By the beginning of the year 1864, the subsistence of the army had become almost impossible. "Many of the infantry," writes General Lee in an official communication, "are without shoes, and the cavalry worn down by the pursuit of Averell. We are now issuing to the troops a fourth of a pound of salt meat, and have only three days' supply at that rate. Two droves of cattle from the West that were reported to be for this army, I am told have been directed to Richmond. I can learn of no supply of meat on the road to the army, and fear I shall be unable to retain it in the field." [1]

In another official letter to the commissary-general he writes: "I regret very much to learn that the supply of beef for the army is so nearly exhausted. . . . No beef has been issued to the cavalry corps by the chief commissary, that I am aware of, for eighteen months. During that time it has supplied itself, and has now, I understand, sufficient to last until the middle of February." [2]

Two weeks later he writes the quartermaster-general as follows: "General: The want of shoes and blankets in this army continues to cause much suffering and to impair its efficiency. In one regiment, I am informed, there are only fifty men with serviceable shoes, and a brigade that recently went on picket was compelled to leave several hundred men in camp that were unable

[1] Letter to President Davis, January 2, 1864.

[2] Letter to Colonel L. B. Northrop, commissary-general, January 5, 1864.

to bear the exposure of duty, being destitute of shoes and blankets." [1]

He thereupon urges that instead of trusting to the precarious supplies procured by running the blockade, the South should spare no effort to develop her own resources.

But the time had passed when the South could develop her resources, and it was soon to come when even the precarious supply by blockade-running was to cease altogether.

On the 24th of January he wrote his wife: ". . . I have had to disperse the cavalry as much as possible to obtain forage for their horses, and it is that which causes trouble. Provisions for the men, too, are very scarce, and with very light diet and light clothing I fear they suffer. But still they are cheerful and uncomplaining. I received a report from one division the other day in which it stated that over four hundred men were barefooted and over one thousand without blankets. . . ."

Such was the condition of the army in the depth of the winter of 1863–64, and it steadily grew worse. By the opening of spring Lee stood face to face with the gravest problem that can confront a general—the impossibility of subsisting his army—and, moreover, his own strength was waning, although he was yet to put forth the supreme effort which was to make his defence of Virginia against Grant possibly the greatest defensive campaign in history. In a letter to his eldest son, expressing his hearty acquiescence in an order substi-

[1] Letter to Brigadier-General R. A. Lawton, quartermaster-general, January 18, 1864.

tuting a chief engineer in place of his son, for whom he had applied, with the design of making him chief of staff, he says: "I thought that position presented less objections to your serving with me than any other. . . . I want all the aid I can get now. I feel a marked change in my strength since my attack last spring at Fredericksburg, and am less competent for my duty than ever." [1]

All through the spring, with undimmed vision, he had foreseen the tragic fate awaiting him, and his letters show plainly how clear this vision was, yet never once does he show aught but the same heroic constancy which had distinguished him in the past. "In none of them," says Long, "does he show a symptom of despair or breathe a thought of giving up the contest. To the last, he remained full of resources, energetic and defiant, and ready to bear on his own shoulders the whole burden of the conduct of the war." [2]

In March, when lying opposite Grant's great army on the Rapidan, he wrote the President of the indication that Grant was concentrating a great force to operate in Virginia. And on April 6 he writes of the great efforts that, according to all the information he received, were to be made in Virginia. A week later he writes him again:

HEAD-QUARTERS, *April* 12, 1864.

*Mr. President:* My anxiety on the subject of provisions for the army is so great that I cannot refrain from expressing it to your Excellency. I cannot see

[1] Letter of April 6, 1864.

[2] Long's "Lee."

how we can operate with our present supplies. Any derangement in their arrival, or disaster to the railroad, would render it impossible for me to keep the army together, and might force a retreat into North Carolina. There is nothing to be had in this section for men or animals. We have rations for the troops to-day and to-morrow. . . . Every exertion should be made to supply the depots at Richmond and at other points. . . .

I am, with great respect, your obedient servant,

R. E. Lee, *General.*

Three weeks later in a letter stating the movements of Grant's troops along the Rappahannock, and the signs of "large preparations on the part of the enemy and a state of readiness for action," he adds: "If I could get back Pickett, Hoke, and B. R. Johnson, I would feel strong enough to operate. . . . I cannot get the troops together for want of forage and am looking for grass." It was a tragic situation. Three days later, on the night of May 3, 1864, Grant crossed the Rapidan with an army of over 140,000 men, many of them veteran troops, as brave men as ever carried a musket—armed and equipped in a manner unsurpassed, if equalled, in the annals of war, officered by the flower of the North. He had also 318 guns and a wagon-train that, stretched in a line, would have reached to Richmond.[1] He controlled, with the aid of the exceedingly efficient navy, the York and the James to Dutch Gap,

[1] "The army immediately opposed to Lee numbered, when it crossed the Rapidan, on May 4, 1864, 149,166 men. While Lee had within call 62,000, but with only half that number he moved on and attacked Grant's army in the Wilderness." (Jones's "Life and Letters of R. E. Lee," p. 310.)

where Butler lay with an army which could spare him 16,000 men, to help in the deadly assaults at Cold Harbor, and a few days later could carry the formidable outer defences of Petersburg.

To meet this force, Lee had 62,000 men and 224 guns. His army was less efficiently armed and with an equipment which would have been hopelessly insufficient for any other army than the one he commanded: the war-worn veterans of the Army of Northern Virginia, inured to hunger and hardship and battle.

On the 12th day of June, when Grant crossed the James to the south side, of the 140,000 men who had crossed the Rapidan one month and nine days before he had lost nearly 60,000, almost as many men as Lee had had during the campaign. On the 9th of April following, when Lee surrendered, Grant's losses had mounted up to 124,390, two men for every one that Lee had in his army at any time.[1] By this record posterity must judge the two captains. It will also pay its tribute to the valor which could stand up against such losses.

The adverse criticism of Grant is based on the charge that he sacrificed over 50,000 men to reach the James, when he might have reached the south side of James River and laid siege to Petersburg and Richmond without the loss of a man.[2] As to whether, had he done this, he could have succeeded in the destruction of

[1] E. P. Alexander's "Memoirs," p. 619.

[2] Grant's losses, from May 4, when he crossed the Rapidan, to June 12, when, staggering back from Cold Harbor, he abandoned his first plan of attack and crossed to the south side of the James, was, according to the Union authorities, 54,929. (Rhodes's "History," vol. IV, p. 447;

Lee's army, the impregnable defence of the Confederate capital, can never be known. Grant thought not, and he was eminently clear-headed and practical. He is said to have declared pithily that his objective was Lee's head-quarters tent. It was, moreover, necessary for him not only to defeat Lee, but at the same time to protect Washington, failure to do which had cost McClellan his place.

No one knew so well as Lee the disastrous consequences of this policy of attrition. From August on his letters express plainly his recognition of the terrible fact that his army was wearing down without the hope of his losses being repaired.[1] His soldierly prevision enabled him to predict precisely what afterward occurred: the extension of Grant's lines to envelop him, and the consequent loss of Richmond.[2]

The design of Grant to capture Petersburg, and, by cutting off Richmond from the South, force the capitulation of the Confederate capital, was undoubtedly able strategy, and why it had not been attempted by him before seems even now an enigma, for McClellan had urged it warmly in July, 1862, and a dash had been made to seize Richmond from this side by a daring raid which, possibly, had failed only because of a rise in the James River which prevented the raiding party from crossing; and the mouth of the Appomat-

The Century Co.'s "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War," vol. IV, p. 182.) And among these were the flower of his army, as gallant officers and men as ever faced death on a battle-field.

[1] Letter to Secretary of War, August 23, 1864. Letter to President Davis, September 2, 1864.

[2] Letter of October 10, 1864.

tox was as securely in the possession of the Union as the mouth of the Delaware.

Applause has properly been accorded Grant for his skilful manœuvre when, after Cold Harbor, he slipped away from Lee and crossed to the south side of the James without molestation. It was a capital piece of work, and showed the utmost ability in moving troops secretly in large bodies under difficult conditions. In truth, however, he failed absolutely in the immediate object of this movement: the securing, as he wrote Halleck, of the city of Petersburg by a coup before the Confederates could get there in much force.[1]

His plan to seize Petersburg with its slender garrison of less than 2,500 men was foiled by Beauregard, to whom only on his urgent request Lee at length sent men from the north side of the James, and though Grant was enabled to take, on June 15, "the formidable works to the north-east of the town," when he attacked in force on three successive days he was repulsed with the loss of 10,000 men, losses which shook and disheartened his army even more, possibly, than the slaughter at Cold Harbor.[2]

The demoralization consequent on Lee's victories from the Wilderness to Petersburg, over "the crippled Army of the Potomac," which now enabled him to detach Early and, with a view to repeating the strategy of 1862, send him to the valley of Virginia, followed by that general's signal success, in conjunction with Breckinridge, in clearing the valley of Sigel and Hunter,

[1] Official Records, vol. XI, pp. 1, 12.
[2] E. P. Alexander's "Memoirs," chap. XXI.

and, after defeating Wallace at Monocacy Bridge, in immediately threatening Washington itself, sent gold up from 168, its rate in May, to 285, the highest point it reached during the war.[1]

The authorities in Washington, more alarmed even than when Lee was at Sharpsburg or at Chambersburg, were clamoring for Grant to come and assume personal command of the forces protecting the city. And it is alleged that Grant escaped the fate of his predecessors only because there was no one else to put in his place. It was even charged that he had fallen "back into his old habits of intemperance," a charge which Mr. Lincoln dryly dismissed with a witticism.[2]

Congress, by resolution, requested the President "to appoint a day for humiliation and prayer," and the President, "cordially concurring . . . in the pious sentiments expressed" in this resolution, appointed the first Thursday in August as a day of national humiliation and prayer. Swinton declares that "there was at this time great danger of a collapse of the war." [3]

The simple truth is that, against great outside clamor, Grant was sustained by the authorities in Washington

[1] Rhodes's "History of the United States," IV, p. 509. Swinton, p. 494.

[2] "Despondency and discouragement," says Rhodes, the latest and among the most thoughtful of all the Northern historians of the war, "are words which portray the state of feeling at the North during the month of July, and the closer one's knowledge of affairs, the gloomier was his view; but the salient facts put into every one's mind the pertinent question, 'Who shall revive the withered hopes that bloomed on the opening of Grant's campaign?'" This question he quotes from the *New York World*, a paper which he states was not unfriendly to Grant. ("History of the United States," IV, p. 507.)

[3] Swinton's "Army of the Potomac," p. 494.

because he was manifestly the best general in sight, and not because he had proved himself the equal of Lee. That he was retained is a proof of Mr. Lincoln's wisdom, for he was thenceforth to prove the man for the occasion.

So great was the feeling of despondency at the North at this time that several serious, if somewhat informal, embassies were sent by the authorities at Washington to ascertain the feeling of the Confederate authorities touching peace on the basis of a restoration of the Union, coupled at first with a condition of "an abandonment of slavery," but later without even this condition.

On the very day that Mr. Davis, yielding to clamor at the South against the Fabian policy of the cautious Johnston, who had been falling back before Sherman, relieved that veteran officer of his command, he accorded an interview to two gentlemen who had come on an irregular mission, with the knowledge and consent of Mr. Lincoln, to ask whether any measure could be tried that might lead to peace. Mr. Davis rejected the proposal to make peace, unless with it came the acknowledgment of the right of the South to self-government; "and," declares the historian above quoted, "taking into account the actual military situation, a different attitude on the part of the Richmond government could not have been expected." [1]

Viewed in the cold light of the inexorable facts, the honors at this time in Virginia were all with the Confederate general, and later comparisons so invidious to Lee have all been made in the light of subsequent

[1] Rhodes's "History of the United States," IV, pp. 514–516.

events, over which neither Grant nor Lee exercised control.

In truth, it was not until long afterward, and after it was found that the resources of the South were exhausted, that Grant's costly policy of attrition was accepted by the government or the people, and his star, which had been waning, once more ascended. That it ever ascended again was due in part to his constancy of purpose, and for the rest, to "successes elsewhere" and to the exhaustion of the South, particularly to the destruction of the means of communication.

While Grant was dashing his men against Lee's lines with such deadly consequences, Sherman, marching across the country, was forcing Johnston gradually back by manœuvring and flanking rather than attacking in front as Grant attacked Lee. His force was about 100,000 men, while Johnston's army of about 40,000, with Polk's force of 19,000, which had been ordered from Mississippi to join him, aggregated less than 60,000. At Altoona, where Johnston awaited attack in a strong defensive position, Sherman refused battle and moved westward to Dallas. At New Hope Church, on May 24, Hooker's and Howell's corps assaulted Johnston's lines, but were repulsed with heavy loss. On the 14th of June, at Pine Knob, the assault was unsuccessful, but the defence cost the life of the gallant General Polk.

On June 24, and again on the 27th, Johnston was attacked at Kennesaw Mountain, but both attacks were repulsed with heavy loss, and Sherman drew off by the flank and forced Johnston to fall back. John-

ston's plan was to draw Sherman farther and farther from his base, and then, when opportunity offered, as he felt sure it would in time, attack him and, if successful, destroy his army. The people of the country, however, were wild with dismay at Sherman's continued advance and clamored for Johnston's removal. The Confederate President accordingly, after a tart correspondence with him, removed Johnston on July 17 and placed General Hood in command. Hood had been assigned to command with the understanding that he must fight, and fight he did, with the result of being defeated and driven into Atlanta, which, a little later on (September 1), he was forced to evacuate to avoid being cut off and captured. On August 23 Admiral Farragut captured Mobile. These "successes elsewhere" did much to relieve the situation at the North, and they were soon followed by others. Sherman having occupied Atlanta, Hood moved back into Tennessee with the idea of destroying Sherman's communications and recapturing Nashville, believing that this would compel Sherman to abandon his project and return to the West. Sherman, however, after following him for a time, sent Thomas to Nashville, and reinforcing him with the Fourth and Twenty-third army corps, returned himself to Atlanta and a little later marched on to the sea, capturing Savannah.

Hood, with some 35,000 men, having been joined by the noted and able General Forrest, moved on into Tennessee, and on November 30 attacked Schofield at Franklin, and after a furious fight carried his lines and forced him to retire to Nashville. Following him

up, Hood took position before Nashville. Here he was attacked by Thomas on the 15th and 16th of December, his lines broken and his army totally routed, losing 54 guns. His army was, indeed, substantially destroyed.

No step could have given more aid and comfort to the North, or have been more disastrous to the South, than the removal of Johnston at the moment when, if his strategy had not prepared the way for the possible destruction of the invading force, the veteran general was, at least, preparing to carry out the consistent plan he had laid down from the beginning. Abroad it satisfied the anxious nations of Europe that the South was at her last gasp and established their hitherto vacillating policy in favor of the Union cause, and the Southern cause thereafter steadily declined to its end.

The same day that the President of the Confederate States removed Joseph E. Johnston, the President of the United States, appalled at the effect of Lee's masterly defence of Richmond, issued a proclamation calling for 500,000 men, and before Grant learned of this call he wrote urging a draft of 300,000 immediately.[1]

Europe now changed front. The skilful diplomacy of Charles Francis Adams had prevented the delivery to the Confederacy of the arms which had been built for her; the sympathies of the European nations had shifted, and the South was, as has been well said by the son and namesake of the able diplomat referred to, as securely shut up to perish as if she had been in a vast vacuum. The victories of diplomacy are little considered beside those of the battle-field. But, taking

[1] Rhodes, "History of the United States," IV, pp. 506, 507.

into consideration what the *Merrimac* had accomplished during her brief but formidable cruise in Hampton Roads, where she sank the *Cumberland*, captured the *Congress's* crew, and drove the famous *Monitor* into shoal water, it is probable that the blockade of the Southern ports might have been broken had not Mr. Adams's unremitting efforts availed to prevent the Confederate rams being delivered.

As it was, the end was clearly in view to Lee. The destruction of Hood's army at Nashville removed the only force capable of blocking the way of Sherman across the South, and left him free to march to the sea, and, having got in touch with the fleet there, continue northward through the Carolinas, marking his way with a track of devastation which has been aptly likened to that made when Saxe carried fire and sword through the Palatinate.

Grant having settled down to the siege of Richmond, Lee, with "Richmond hung like a millstone about his neck," a figure he is said to have employed, was now forced to guard a line extending from the south of Petersburg to the north of Richmond, and to withstand with his thinning ranks his able antagonist with an ever-growing army and an ever-increasing confidence.

The able and acute critic of the war, already cited, has given it as his opinion that it was not Richmond which hung like a millstone about Lee's neck, but the Tredegar Iron Works at Richmond. These works, he holds, were the "determining factor of Lee's strategy," and indeed of the strategy of the whole Civil War. He argues that, "without the Tredegar Works to supply

him with artillery and keep his artillery in working order, Lee's army could not have held the field two months." The defence of Richmond, therefore, was not a mere matter of sentiment on the part of the Confederacy, but was vital to the continuance of the contest. No modern army can hold the field unless it has arsenals and machinery for the manufacture and repair of artillery, etc., at its command, and he states it as his opinion that "the capture by us of Richmond, or the abandonment of Richmond by Lee, including as it would the loss of the Tredegar Works, would have brought the war to a termination at any period, and from the very commencement to the end, Richmond, or the Tredegar Iron Works, was the vital point of the Confederacy." [1]

That this is, at least, a debatable question, Lee himself would appear to have thought, if he is quoted correctly as having referred to Richmond as the millstone about his neck. But whether it was Richmond or the Tredegar Iron Works which bound him to the line of the James, all that winter Lee lay in the trenches with his "hands tied," while his army withered and perished from want and cold, and while Sherman, almost unopposed, burnt, in sheer riot of destruction, supplies that might, had they been available, have subsisted that army for ten years, and yet by the policy of the Confederate Government were left unprotected.

By the end of the year all available resources were exhausted.

[1] Charles Francis Adams's address on Lee.

On the 11th of January, 1865, Lee sent this despatch to the Secretary of War:

HON. J. A. SEDDON:

There is nothing within reach of this army to be impressed. The country is swept clear. Our only reliance is upon the railroads. We have but two days' supplies.

R. E. LEE.

Sherman, on December 21, reached the sea at Savannah, and thus was in a position to connect with Grant by sea or by a sweep up the coast. The latter plan was chosen, possibly in part to let South Carolina feel the iron enter into her soul. Sherman crossed her borders on February 21, and though Charleston was not "sown with salt," as Halleck had suggested, it felt the full weight of the hostility which prompted the suggestion and response.

Meantime, the navy, that vast force so little considered in all the histories of the war, was consummating its work. It performed the part of holding the South by the throat while the army hammered the life out of her. Following an unsuccessful attempt under Butler at the end of December, the capture of Fort Fisher, on the North Carolina coast, on January 15, closed, in Wilmington, the last door through which even the meagre supplies of the blockade-runner could reach the Confederacy, and thenceforth the South was, as has been well said, "hermetically sealed."

It may be stated, in passing, that Grant, relieved now

of all political restrictions, promptly relieved Butler after his fiasco at Wilmington in December. At the end of January an attempt was made to bring about a peace through the Hampton Roads Conference, but nothing came of it.

In this extremity the Confederate authorities at last recognized what many men had long felt: that on Lee now rested the sole hope of the Confederacy, and Mr. Davis finally came to the tardy conclusion that he should be given command of all the armies of the South. He accordingly yielded to the Congress and conferred on Lee what Mr. Lincoln had conferred on Grant nearly a year before: untrammelled command of all the forces of the country. Unfortunately, it was too late. The President of the United States could furnish his general all the men he required and all the supplies they needed. The President of the Confederate States could furnish his general neither men nor supplies. The "seed corn" of the Confederacy had all been ground. Lee, when he received his appointment, faced an empty and broken-down commissariat, a country denuded of men, swept clean of supplies, with every avenue of entrance closed and every means of conveyance crippled. The South Atlantic States were clamorous, and not unnaturally, for protection against the army, which, under a vandal leader, was sweeping almost unopposed across them, marking its course with a swath of fire which spared nothing.

On February 6 Lee was appointed to the command in chief of the armies of the Confederacy. But it was too late. He telegraphed the Secretary of War on

February 8, 1865, a statement of the deplorable condition of his army:

*Sir:* All the disposable force of the right wing of the army has been operating against the enemy beyond Hatcher's Run since Sunday. Yesterday, the most inclement day of the winter, they had to be retained in line of battle, having been in the same condition the two previous days and nights. I regret to be obliged to state that under these circumstances, heightened by assaults and fire of the enemy, some of the men had been without meat for three days, and all were suffering from reduced rations and scant clothing, exposed to battle, cold, hail, and sleet. I have directed Colonel Coler, chief commissary, who reports that he has not a pound of meat at his disposal, to visit Richmond and see if nothing can be done. If some change is not made and the Commissary Department reorganized, I apprehend dire results. The physical strength of the men, if their courage survives, must fail under such treatment. Our cavalry has to be dispersed for want of forage. Fitz Lee's and Lomax's Divisions are scattered because supplies cannot be transported where their services are required. I had to bring William H. F. Lee's Division forty miles Sunday night to get him in position. Taking these facts in connection with the paucity of our numbers you must not be surprised if calamity befalls us. . . .

R. E. Lee, *General.*

President Davis endorsed on this report: "This is too sad to be patiently considered and cannot have occurred without criminal neglect or gross incapacity. . . ." A comment as true to-day as when Lee set before him plainly the tragic fact that his army was fast perishing at its post.

Unfortunately for the South, the rest of the President's endorsement, "Let supplies be had by purchase or borrowing or other possible mode," was inefficacious. There was no longer any possible mode by which supplies could be had. The South was exhausted. Virginia had been swept clean and there were no means of transporting supplies from elsewhere.

Subsistence could not be, or, at least, was not, furnished, and while the sword attacked in front, hunger assailed in the rear. His men had, he wrote the War Department in February, endured all that flesh and blood could endure. In the battle line, suffering from cold and exhaustion, they not only had not had meat for three days, but to them came the cry from their starving families at home. His officers reported "not a few cases" in which men had gone insane from privation, hardship, and strain. No wonder that his numbers dwindled and that his tardy elevation, in February, to the position of commander-in-chief was futile to recoup the destruction.

Lee had already carried the fortunes of the Confederacy on his shoulders for, at least, two years longer than the Confederacy could have survived without his genius to sustain it; and now the time had come when no mortal power could longer support it.[1] Its end had come. All had gone except the indomitable and immortal spirit of its people.

In this desperate state of affairs, however, Lee applied himself to refill his depleted ranks by every possible means. His first general order, after that in

[1] E. P. Alexander's "Memoirs," p. 599.

which he on the 9th of February assumed formally the chief command of the Confederate forces, was one "offering pardon to all deserters and those improperly absent if they returned to duty within twenty days (except those who had deserted to the enemy), and an exhortation to all Southern soldiers to respond to the call of honor and duty." He had for some time advocated the enlistment of negroes as soldiers. "Six months before he had advocated their employment as teamsters, laborers, and mechanics in place of whites, who, being replaced, could be restored to the ranks." [1] He now proposed to employ them as soldiers, feeling assured that he could make as good soldiers of them as the enemy.

But as imperative as was the need of men, an even more impossible requirement to meet was the supplies and equipment. Wilmington, the last port through which these had dribbled in from the outside world, had, as stated, been closed when Fort Fisher fell; and the main source of supply—capture from the enemy—had been cut off when the army, which had been wont to act as its own ordnance department, was confined to the defensive lines of a siege.

The Tredegar Iron Works at Richmond, the chief factory for ordnance within the Confederacy, as we have seen, the preservation of which is, perhaps, the key to much of the astonishing stubbornness of the Confederate Government to defend that city to the last, was compelled to perform itself every labor which entered into the manufacture of their guns. That is, it was obliged

[1] F. Lee's "Lee," p. 307.

to mine the ore in the mountains, to mine the coal and cut the wood with which to smelt this ore, to transport it to the iron works, and to mine the coal with which to manufacture the guns.[1]

Thus, Lee, on his promotion, found himself with a barren honor and a useless authority. His appeal to the people to furnish him for his cavalry all saddles, revolvers, pistols, and carbines that might be in their possession is a proof of the extremity to which he had come.

One of the first acts he performed as commander proved how widely he differed from the authorities in Richmond in his views of the situation. Beauregard was in the South endeavoring, with such troops as could be mustered, to hold Sherman at bay; but the force under his hand was hopelessly inadequate for the task. Lee had Johnston reinstated in command, from which he had been so disastrously removed by the Southern President in the preceding July at the clamor of the South Atlantic States, panic-stricken by his Fabian policy. Lee's reason was unanswerable. "Beauregard has a difficult task to perform," he said to the Secretary of War, "and one of his best officers, General Hardee, is incapacitated by sickness. I have heard that his own health is indifferent; should his health give way there is no one in the department to replace him, nor have I any one to send there. General J. E. Johnston is the only officer I know who has the confidence of the army and the people, and if he were ordered to report to me I would place him there

[1] Address of Colonel Archer Anderson on the Tredegar Company.

on duty." He was so ordered on the 23d of February, and was placed on duty in command of the Army of the Tennessee and all troops in the department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. But the major portion of the fine army he had commanded in the summer of 1864 had been extirpated on the bloody fields of Franklin and Nashville. Johnston's force before Sherman numbered only 18,761—truly "an army in effigy." With this force, as he wrote Lee, he "could only annoy Sherman, not stop him," for Sherman, after Schofield joined him at Goldsboro, had nearly 90,000 men.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE LAST DITCH

Lee now knew that he had but one chance that gave promise of success. This was to withdraw his depleted army from its trenches, where it had wasted away in its long vigil, and, marching around Grant's extended left, head for Danville on the southern border of Virginia, where he could get supplies and where, uniting with Johnston, he might fall on Sherman and destroy him before Grant could come to his rescue. It was a plan which commended itself to both the Southern generals, and Johnston wrote Lee: "You have only to decide where to meet Sherman. I will be near him."

It was a difficult and hazardous undertaking, for his lines extended for over thirty miles so close to the lines of his alert and powerful antagonist that the men in the two armies used to call across to each other and exchange the rough banter of the trenches. A story went the rounds that winter that after one of the movements in which the Confederates had checked decisively the Union advance, they were shouting their exasperating triumph across the trenches. At length the hectoring could be stood no longer and the challenge came back, "Swap generals with us and we'll come over and lick h—l out of you!"

On the face of conditions there were many chances against the successful accomplishment of Lee's design. Lee's army was terribly enfeebled by the hardship of the winter in the trenches with insufficient shelter and food and the strain of constant duty under deadly fire. His men were shadows, his horses wraiths. His wagon-trains were sent as far away as West Virginia and North Carolina in the effort to collect supplies.

Grant, on the other hand, had an army not only more than twice as large, but many times as well nourished and equipped as that with which Lee had held him at bay so long.

But for the indomitable spirit which Lee's force displayed, it might, indeed, have appeared but the shadow of an army which, on the night of April 2, with hushed and silent voices, moved in the darkness from the trenches which they had held so long against their foes.

Another determining factor was Grant himself. He had weathered the storms of the autumn and the winter and now possessed the entire confidence of his superiors at Washington. Sherman's "spectacular raid," as Schofield termed his "march to the sea," and Sheridan's sweep down the valley and across the Piedmont to Grant's camp on the Appomattox, had shown that the South was now but a shell, emptied of all that had made her formidable. It was known now in Washington that there was no longer any body to those spectral armies whose tramp had been wont to fly on the wings of rumor and keep Washington city in a constant nightmare. Grant had satisfied the authorities

that the army of the South-west was no longer a peril, that Sherman could handle Johnston and he himself could crush Lee. He was now as well aware as Lee himself that Lee must soon abandon his defensive line or starve in it; and he prepared to prevent the former by a movement which should envelop and lock him in his trenches and force him to capitulate.

Lee's perception of the situation at this time was expressed by him to the Secretary of War in terms which could not have been clearer had the events he forecast actually occurred. "You may expect," he said to General Breckinridge on February 21, "Sheridan to move down the valley and Stoneman from Knoxville. What, then, will become of those sections of the country? Bragg will be forced back by Schofield, I fear, and until I abandon the James River, nothing can be sent from the army. Grant is preparing to draw out by his left with the intent of enveloping me; he may be preparing to anticipate my withdrawal. Everything of value should be removed from Richmond. The cavalry and artillery are still scattered for want of provender, and our supply and ammunition trains, which ought to be with the army in case of a sudden movement, are absent collecting provisions and forage in West Virginia and North Carolina. You will see to what straits we are reduced."

"To what straits," indeed!

To his wife, who had sent him "a bag of socks for the army," he wrote on the same day: "You will have to send down your offerings as soon as you can and bring your work to a close, for I think General Grant

will move against us soon—within a week if nothing prevents—and no man can tell what may be the result. But trusting to a merciful God, who does not always give the battle to the strong, I pray we may not be overwhelmed. I shall, however, endeavor to do my duty and fight to the last. Should it be necessary to abandon our position to prevent being surrounded, what will you do? Will you remain or leave the city? You must consider the question and make up your mind. It is a fearful condition and we must rely for guidance and protection upon a kind providence." [1]

Thus, notwithstanding the odds against him, Lee, trusting in God and reliant on the heroic remnant of his army that remained, believed that he could extricate his army from the enveloping meshes of Grant's steadily extending lines and effect a union with Johnston. He so notified the government in Richmond early in March, and it was understood that he would move as soon as the roads would admit of his doing so.

The suggestion, slight as it was, of a possibility that something might prevent Grant's moving within a week related to a movement which had already taken form in his mind to make one final effort to forestall Grant and possibly surprise and defeat him. Before abandoning his defences and taking this final step which would surrender Richmond, he determined to make one last, desperate attempt to break Grant's line in the hope that, should fortune favor him, he might defeat his resolute antagonist at the very moment when he thought to pluck the fruit of his long waiting. In

[1] Fitzhugh Lee's "Lee," p. 170.

any event he hoped to compel Grant to withdraw troops from his extended left to protect his right at the point of attack on his right near the Appomattox. This would, at least, defer the enveloping of Lee's right, which Grant was pushing forward, and would postpone the abandonment of Richmond and give him time till the roads became less impassable.

Arrangements were, therefore, now made to attack the forts on the right of the line held by the Army of the Potomac toward the Appomattox, with a view to seizing Fort Stedman and what were supposed to be a number of forts on the high ground in the rear commanding it, together with the lines on either side. Accordingly, before dawn on the 25th of March, Gordon, who now commanded Ewell's Corps, and who, having suggested it, and being eager to make the attempt, had been placed in charge of the movement, massed his men, his own corps with a part of Longstreet's and Hill's, behind the cover of the trenches opposite the Federal entrenchment known as Fort Stedman. At this point the opposing lines were only one hundred and fifty yards apart, and the ditches where the pickets lay only fifty yards apart. Fort Stedman, with three forts beyond it, was to be captured by a dash, and through the breach thus made, Gordon's troops and a large body ordered down by General Lee from Longstreet's Corps were to pass, seize the high ground in the rear, and sweep along the entrenchments held by the Ninth Corps, being "joined by the other troops as their fronts were cleared." The cavalry was to pass through the clearing and then "gallop to the rear, destroy Grant's

railroad and telegraph lines, and cut away his pontoons across the river, while the infantry swept down the rear of the Union entrenchments."

In the darkness of the hour preceding dawn, Gordon, with three columns, preceded by a storming party of three hundred picked men, and by picked axemen to cut away the abatis and fraise in front of the Union lines, led by guides, moved out of the Confederare lines, and, having seized and overpowered the pickets without the firing of a shot, rushed on, and, with a dash, captured Fort Stedman, together with a number of supporting batteries. This was accomplished with the loss of only a half dozen men, and the troops swept along the breastworks on either side, capturing cannon and mortars and nearly a thousand prisoners, including those in the fort itself, together with General McLaughlin, its commander. Having been completely successful thus far, they pressed forward with the expectation of seizing the forts in the rear. It happened, however, that what had been supposed to be forts open at the gorge, were in fact redoubts that had a commanding fire on both Fort Stedman and also on the lines and open batteries to the right and left. In these redoubts the Ninth Corps was now being concentrated, and as the day broke, its entire force was directed against Gordon's troops in the captured batteries below them. The storming parties had pushed forward and the skirmishers were already at the military railroad and telegraph lines; but in the mêlée and the darkness the guides had either deserted or been lost, and the storming parties, finding no forts as they

expected, fell into confusion and were either forced back or captured. The large body of troops sent by General Lee from Longstreet's Corps had been delayed by the breaking down of trains and failed to reach Gordon in time to render assistance. Thus, daylight found Gordon with his plans only half executed, and General Parke's prompt concentration of his troops on the heights which commanded the captured batteries prevented further progress; and, more than this, it rendered the lines already seized untenable, for they were subjected to a cross-fire of artillery and infantry. Lee, finding that further advance was impossible, ordered Gordon to retire; but this was far more difficult than the advance had been. Both artillery and infantry swept the space beyond the lines and only a portion got back alive, the loss of the Confederates having been very heavy, including 1,949 prisoners, among whom were 71 officers.[1] Thus, came to a disastrous end one of the most daring, and what promised to be most brilliant, feats in the history of Lee's army.

This was, as General Gordon has well said, the inauguration of the period of more than two weeks of almost incessant battle, which began on the morning of March 25 and ended with the last charge of Lee's army, made likewise by Gordon's men on the morning of April 9 at Appomattox.[2]

As a sequel to these far-reaching conditions, under the policy of attrition which had gone on from month to

[1] Humphreys' "Virginia Campaign in 1864–65."

[2] General John B. Gordon, "Reminiscences of the Civil War," pp. 400–413.

month, on the fatal 2d of April, Lee, following an extension of Grant's lines around his flank, which broke his connection with the South and threatened to envelop him, announced to his government that he could no longer maintain the long line from south of Petersburg to north of Richmond.

On the 29th of March, as Lee was preparing to evacuate Petersburg and start south to unite with Johnston and attack Sherman, Grant, who was so apprehensive of such a movement that he said he never awoke without expecting to hear that Lee had slipped away, began to move around his right to foil it. To prevent this, Lee was forced to withdraw troops from other parts of his line, and Grant promptly proceeded to take advantage of this fact.

On the 1st of April, following a repulse on the evening before in front of Lee's extreme right, Sheridan attacked and defeated, at Five Forks, Pickett, who had left a long gap of several miles defended only by pickets between his troops and the nearest line. And Grant, having carried Lee's outer defences, ordered a general assault for the next day. Lee, knowing the wasted condition of his army and the impossibility of holding against Grant's contemplated assault his long-stretched line, decided to execute at once, if possible, his plan to abandon the lines he had held for nearly ten months and move southward to effect a junction with Johnston. He notified the government in Richmond, arranged for provisions to meet him at Amelia Court House, and that night executed with skill the difficult feat of extricating his reduced army from its perilous position

and started on a retreat southward. Such, in general terms, were the steps which led to the abandonment of Richmond.

In more detail these steps were as follows:

As early as the middle of March, Grant issued instructions to the Army of the Potomac for its guidance in anticipation of Lee's abandoning his lines. On the 24th of March he issued orders for a general turning movement to begin on the 29th, by which he proposed to seize the Danville and South-side (or Lynchburg) Railways and turn Lee's right. It was the next day on which Lee attempted unsuccessfully to break his lines at Fort Stedman.

On the 27th Grant held a conference with Sherman, who had come from North Carolina for the purpose, and, unfolding to him his plan for a general movement on the 29th, gave him his instructions. He was to threaten Raleigh, and then, turning to the right, strike the Roanoke River near Weldon, on the North Carolina border, from which point he could move to Burkeville, at the junction of the Danville and the Lynchburg Railways, and intercept Lee's retreat on Danville or Lynchburg, or could join Grant before Richmond.

Grant was now confident of success, and he might well be sanguine. He had 124,700 men ready for duty and 369 guns, while Lee had not over 35,000 muskets and perhaps not over 10,000 artillery and cavalry. Humphreys, in his careful and admirable work, "The Virginia Campaign of '64 and '65," states Grant's effective force at the end of March to have been 124,700 men of all arms, and Lee's effective force to have been

57,000 men of all arms. But General Fitzhugh Lee states that he had at that time "35,000 muskets, but after Five Forks and in the encounter of March 31 and April 1 and 2 he had only 20,000 muskets available, and of all arms not over 25,000, when he began the retreat that terminated at Appomattox Court House." [1]

Whatever the disparity in numbers, Grant's force was so vastly preponderant that he could mass more men at any one point of Lee's line of thirty-odd miles than Lee had in his whole army, and yet threaten with a superior force the entire remainder of those lines. On the 27th, Grant, having determined not to defer his movement till the 29th, as originally planned, but to act at once, despatched Ord with the Army of the James to his extreme left, who, marching by night, was enabled to take position unobserved in the rear of the Second Corps, thirty-six miles from his former position. Sheridan was ordered next day to cross Hatcher's Run the following morning (the 29th), and proceeding to and beyond Dinwiddie Court House, near which the Second and Fifth Corps would be posted, push on and take a position which would so threaten Lee's right as to force him out of his entrenched lines. If Lee still held his lines, then Sheridan was to proceed against his lines of communication, the Danville and the South-side Railways, and destroy them effectively. This latter alternative was, however, countermanded next day. Humphreys, Warren, and Wright were also set in motion to strengthen Grant's left and carry

[1] F. Lee's "Lee." p. 373. E. P. Alexander's "Military Memoirs," p. 590.

through the turning movement, and Parke with the Ninth Corps was to occupy Wright's entrenchments when the Sixth Corps should be withdrawn. It was a formidable movement and was so recognized by Lee. But he was prepared to meet it with such force as he had. Having learned, on March 28, that Sheridan's cavalry was held on the left of the Army of the Potomac, Lee at once sent General Anderson with Bushrod Johnson's Division and Wise's Brigade to his extreme right, and brought over from his extreme left, on the north side of the James, Fitz Lee's Cavalry Division, and putting him in command of all the cavalry there, sent him to attack Sheridan, who was moving toward the important strategic position of Five Forks, where five roads met some four miles to the westward of Lee's extreme right. Pickett's Division, which under its brave commander had won for itself imperishable fame on the field of Gettysburg, was brought over from the left and sent to the extreme right to support Fitz Lee and protect that threatened portion of the Confederate line. At the same time Hill extended his line to the right from Hatcher's Run, where Lee's extreme right had rested. A road, known as the White Oak Road, runs westerly to the cross-roads at Five Forks, some four miles distant, where the Ford Road crosses it and the road to Dinwiddie Court House, eight miles to the south-east, joins them. Fitz Lee's Cavalry Division arrived at Sutherland Station, on the South-side Railroad, on the night of the 29th, and on the morning of the 30th moved to Five Forks, and thence on down the Dinwiddie Court House Road, where it met and

held back Merritt's division, which was on its way to Five Forks. That evening Pickett seized Five Forks with three brigades of his own division—Corse's, Terry's, and Steuart's—and two of Johnson's Brigades —Ransom's and Wallace's—and was joined by Rosser's and W. H. F. Lee's Cavalry Divisions.

Next day Lee made his last offensive counter move.

It rained heavily on the night of the 29th and all day on the 30th, rendering the clay soil so deep as almost to put a stop to Grant's movement, for at half-past eight o'clock on the 31st, corps commanders were notified that there would be no movement of troops that day.[1] But not so with Lee. He now knew the force in front of him and before turning his back he would strike one more blow. The Fifth Corps had been pushed forward by Sheridan and lay fronting the White Oak Road, on Warren's suggestion that he might be able to interpose between Pickett at Five Forks and the rest of Lee's army and isolate the former. Lee proposed to take advantage of this, and, in connection with Pickett's attack, turn the left flank of the Fifth Corps with a part of Hill's and Anderson's Corps and roll it up. Accordingly, on the morning of the 31st he sent McGowan's and Gracie's Brigades to attack Warren's flank, while Hunton's and Wise's Brigades were to attack in front. The opposing forces met as they were proceeding with the movements ordered and a sharp battle ensued, in which the Confederates drove Warren's troops beyond a branch of Gravelly Run to the cover of their artillery, with a loss of 1,400 men;

[1] Humphreys' "Virginia Campaign of '64 and '65," p. 330.

but here Humphreys' corps came to their support and the Confederates were in turn driven back to their entrenchments. Lee thought this movement of sufficient importance to direct it in person.

Meantime, on the morning of the 31st, Fitz Lee's Cavalry moved forward on the Dinwiddie Road, where Devin's division was encountered, and while Munford's Brigade was left to hold them, Pickett, with Fitz Lee's other two divisions, W. H. F. Lee's and Rosser's, moved by Little Five Forks to flank Sheridan, and after stiff fighting at the crossings of Chamberlain's Run, which were stoutly held by Crook, Davies, and Gregg, they carried the crossings, and Munford having forced Devin back, they drove back Sheridan's cavalry, which "fought stubbornly," forcing them back to the courthouse, where "a spirited and obstinate contest ensued, which lasted until night." [1] This defeat of Sheridan caused so much uneasiness that Meade hastened to send forward heavy reinforcements of infantry to his aid, and a confusion of orders led to a widening of the breach between the commander of the Fifth Corps and the commander of the Army of the Potomac, which bore disastrous consequences for the former next day. The knowledge that these reinforcements were on the way to Sheridan caused Pickett to withrdaw that night to Five Forks, where he posted his command in so isolated a position that it led to its destruction on the following day and contributed to destroy the last chance which Lee might have had to defeat his adversary.

When he retired to Five Forks, Pickett entrenched

[1] Humphreys' "Virginia Campaign of '64 and '65," p. 335.

along the White Oak Road, with the cross-roads near the centre of his line, which extended for nearly a mile on either side, with a short return at the left. This left an interval of some three miles between his left and the extreme right of Lee's regular defensive works at Hatcher's Run. It has been said that the line of battle itself was sufficiently well posted, with W. H. F. Lee's Cavalry guarding the right with three guns of Pegram's battalion, and Munford's Cavalry guarding the left, with McGregor's battery at the return, and with the brigades of Corse, Terry, Steuart, Ransom, and Wallace in order from right to left along the line, supported by three guns at the Forks. But the long interval of three miles between the left and Lee's works was held only by a line of cavalry pickets and offered a temptation to any enterprising enemy. Such a one now commanded the army in front of Five Forks.

When Sheridan, now reinforced by the Fifth Corps, discovered at daylight of the 1st that the force which had driven him back the day before had been withdrawn from his front, he promptly pushed forward again and advanced to within a short distance of the White Oak Road, where he found Pickett posted along the road in line of battle. Having learned of the weakness of Pickett's line with the long interval left between him and the regular entrenchments of Lee's army, he made his disposition to break through this gap and cut Pickett off from the rest of the army. He directed his cavalry against Pickett's right, and ordered Warren to move forward against Pickett's left, with his troops so disposed as to contain him with a

portion of them demonstrating against his front, while with the rest he should cross the White Oak Road, attack the angle of the return on White Oak Road, sweep around through the undefended interval and, wheeling, roll up his left flank. The flank movement was carried through successfully, and though the return on Pickett's left was found farther to the westward than had been supposed, the troops of the Fifth Corps, which had passed through the interval and reached his rear, changed their direction and, after a sharp fight at the angle, swept away his left, capturing over 3,000 prisoners and a number of colors. From here they swept on down the breastworks, and though they were held back for a while by the stout resistance offered by the Confederates who formed at right angles to the breastworks and held on stubbornly, they were too strong and overlapped the Confederate line too far to be long withstood.

The contest was, perhaps, too unequal to have been successfully maintained even had the Confederate commander been on the field. But both General Pickett and his cavalry commander, General Fitzhugh Lee, were several miles away, on the north side of Hatcher's Run. Here, by a curious mischance, owing, it is thought, to the conformation of the ground, the heavy forest, and the atmospheric conditions, the sound of the battle did not reach them until after the Confederate left had been flanked and destroyed. It was said that the two generals were engaged, after the arduous and hungry work of the preceding days, in enjoying a meal which some one had provided for them, when a mes-

senger dashed up and informed them of the battle that was raging a few miles away and of the disaster which had befallen the Confederate left. They at once mounted and dashed to the front; but the advance of the Federals had proceeded so far that only General Pickett, who had gotten his horse first and was in advance, was able to cross the bridge over the stream before it was seized, and General Fitzhugh Lee was compelled to ride up the stream some distance to find a crossing place.

When Pickett arrived on the field he found his left shattered and almost destroyed, with the remnant that had not been captured falling sullenly back along the White Oak and Ford Roads toward Five Forks, with the Federal infantry, both on the flank and rear, pushing them hotly. Ayres's, Griffin's, and Crawford's divisions, under the personal supervision of General Warren, were moving on their rear. Pickett tried to stem the advancing tide by taking Terry's Brigade (commanded now by Colonel Mayo) from the entrenchments to the right and flinging it across the Ford Road to meet the force pushing toward Five Forks on the Confederate rear. Here for a time a stand was made by Mayo's and Ransom's Brigades and McGregor's Battery, which had escaped capture with the left wing; but the point could not now be held, and Mayo was ordered to get his men out and make his way to the South-side Railroad, the guns of the battery falling into the enemy's hands. Pickett, finding that Mayo could not hold his ground, now withdrew Corse also from the entrenchments and placed him at right angles

with them to cover the retreat, while Steuart, supported by Pegram's other guns, was still holding on at Five Forks; but they were soon forced to retreat, and the guns, like the others, fell into the enemy's hands, the gallant young Colonel Pegram meeting a soldier's death in his effort to hold on to the last.

Meantime, Custer with two of his brigades had charged the Confederate right, where W. H. F. Lee was holding the line, and had been held back by a counter charge of one of Lee's Brigades in what the historian of "The Virginia Campaign of 1864–65" terms a brilliant encounter, "in which Lee maintained his position." Later Fitzhugh's Brigade of Devin's Division carried the breastworks at Five Forks, capturing the three guns at that point, and Lee was withdrawn to the South-side Railroad, where Fitz Lee was in charge, where he was joined by Munford and the remnant of Pickett's shattered division of infantry. Here they were also joined by Hunton's Brigade of Pickett's Division and later by General R. H. Anderson with three other brigades (Wise's, Gracie's, and Fulton's), whom General Lee, on the announcement of Pickett's defeat, had sent to cover the retreat and to stop the Federal advance around the right wing of his army.

The historian of "The Virginia Campaign of 1864-65" has stated, in his admirable work on this campaign, that it appeared a grave mistake to him "to require Pickett to fight at Five Forks," instead of allowing him to retire to Sutherland Station, where he could be reinforced at need from Lee's right. The

statement would appear to show a misapprehension on his part. Pickett was sent to Five Forks on the 30th to prevent Sheridan's cavalry from seizing the point and destroying the South-side Railroad. At that time there was no infantry force near Dinwiddie Court House. In the battle of the 31st Sheridan was driven back to Dinwiddie Court House and nightfall found Pickett still pressing him back. When during the night, on finding the Fifth Corps coming up on his flank, Pickett withdrew to Five Forks, the situation had so completely changed that he should have promptly notified General Lee of the change, instead of posting his men at the Forks as though it were simply a raiding cavalry force in his front, and going off to the north side of the stream to refresh himself.

The battle of Five Forks was disastrous to the reputation of another gallant soldier and capable general beside the Confederate commander. At nightfall that evening General Sheridan, who had been expressly authorized to do so by General Grant should his judgment justify it, relieved General Warren of his command and ordered him to report directly to Grant. It was a sad and almost inexplicable termination of a fine career, for, although Warren was later acquitted of most of the charges formulated before the court of inquiry which he demanded, he was laid aside for the rest of the campaign and failed to be present at the close to which he had contributed so much. Sheridan's charge was that Warren did not exert himself to get up his corps as rapidly as he might have done; that later in the attack on Pickett's entrenchments he

"became dissatisfied with him"; and that Warren did not exert himself to inspire confidence in his troops. The court's opinion was against there being ground for these charges, for Warren had acted with conspicuous gallantry during a part of the engagement, and it was generally considered among soldiers that the ground of the charges was Warren's "temperament," which had from time to time caused friction with his superior officers. He had done the State much service.

Lee, usually so tolerant of the mistakes of his subordinates, found it hard to forgive the error of Pickett, which cost him so fatal a loss, and but for the complete collapse which followed so soon on the disaster of Five Forks, the commander at Five Forks would probably have been called to account for it.

The end was now in sight. The troops sent by Lee on the night of the 1st under Anderson to cover the retreat of Pickett's shattered force weakened Lee's already thinned lines to the breaking point, and Grant was prompt to take advantage of it. Knowing that Lee would endeavor to rescue the remnant of the force that had been routed at Five Forks, and fearing that he might fall upon Sheridan and destroy him, and at the same time might withdraw from Petersburg and retreat to Danville, Grant ordered an attack "all along the line" at daylight next morning. To prevent the first, he ordered Humphreys with the Second Corps to assault Lee's right immediately if "a vulnerable point" could be found, and if not, to send Miles's division to Sheridan's aid. A fierce attack was accordingly made on Lee's entrenchments along his left and the pickets

were driven in; but, though the assaults were continued through the night, the lines were held firmly.

The Army of Northern Virginia was but a remnant—less than one thousand men to a mile of its defences; but that remnant, as the next hours proved, was "still formidable."

Lee recognized that the defeat at Five Forks was the end of his defence of Richmond and that Grant knew it equally well. He knew that it would inspire Grant and his lieutenants to bend every energy to reap the fruits of this signal fortune, and that he would promptly endeavor to overwhelm him and prevent his withdrawal and march on Danville. Accordingly, he prepared, as best he might, to meet the assault which was coming and arrange for his escape from Grant's converging lines. The two generals never handled their forces better.

The night assault on his right by the Second Corps had been repulsed, but with the break of dawn came the flood. The force that had been sent under Anderson to save Pickett's broken troops and bar Grant's progress around his right was away to the westward confronted by Sheridan's cavalry and the Fifth Corps, flushed with the victory of Five Forks. On his extreme right were four of Hill's Brigades commanded by Heth (McGowan's, McRae's, Cook's, and Scales's), and next on his right lay four more brigades of Hill's Corps (Davis's, McComb's, Lane's, and Thomas's) confronting Wright's and Ord's corps. To their left lay Gordon's Corps confronting Parke, who extended from Lee's centre to the extreme left on the Appomattox.

On Lee's right the cannon had been roaring fitfully

all night. On his centre and left they had subsided after midnight, but before the earliest crack of dawn they had begun again with renewed fury, announcing the storm about to break. Before the earliest dawn a signal gun boomed from the darkness in the direction of Fort Fisher, a strong redoubt to the south-west of Petersburg, at the angle where Lee had stopped Grant's endeavor to extend around his right during the winter and had deflected his line to the southward. In a few minutes the troops of the Sixth Corps were found coming out of the darkness, and within a short time a general assault was in progress.[1] As far to the eastward as the bank of the Appomattox the lines were aflame, for the Army of Northern Virginia, worn to a skeleton, was making its last concerted stand as a whole against the overwhelming number of the Army of the Potomac. It was a day which for daring and resolution was not exceeded by any day in the war.

Accompanied by pioneer parties armed with axes and tools to clear away the abatis and chevaux-de-frise, the columns came on like the waves of the sea. In some places they found that there were no abatis or chevaux-de-frise to cut away—they had been burnt for firewood during the deadly rigor of winter to keep the men in the trenches from freezing, or had been opened to give the troops within the trenches "convenience of access to the front." In some places at the point of Wright's attack on the right there were hardly more muskets than a double picket line to oppose the enemy. Yet these with the artillery in the

[1] Humphreys' "Virginia Campaign in 1864–65."

redoubts made a stout defence before they were overwhelmed and their line carried. The commander of the Sixth Corps reckoned that he lost over 1,000 men in fifteen minutes. Lee's line, however, was pierced, and, leaving a brigade to hold the point, the enemy turned down the entrenchments and captured guns and prisoners as far as Hatcher's Run. While they were thus engaged, Wilcox made a gallant effort to recover the line and drove out the brigade left to hold it, but was in turn driven out again by the heavy reinforcements of Porter's division and two of Turner's brigades of the Twenty-sixth Corps. Thus fought to the end the Army of Northern Virginia.

The piercing of this line forced Lee to bend his right back to the bank of the Appomattox to close the approach to Petersburg to the force which, having broken through his line, was now heading for the city. So close had they come that General A. P. Hill rode into a party of "stragglers," and, as he turned to escape, was shot and killed by them.

Meantime, on Lee's left, his line had to meet a similar assault where Parke's corps on the Jerusalem Plank Road, pursuing the same plan, advanced at dawn with pioneers in front and, breaking through the abatis on either side of Fort Sedgwick, swarmed over the outer works and captured the guns in them and also some 800 prisoners. They found it, however, "a man's fight"; every traverse had to be carried, and then the remnant of the defenders fell back to an inner line where Gordon not only maintained himself, but kept them busy during the rest of the day and into the night defending the

outer line, which they had captured against his attempts at recapture.

Opposite the fort, at a point near what was known as the Crow House, on Lee's right and to the eastward of the Boydton Plank Road, was Humphreys' corps, the Second Corps. It had carried the picket line the evening before, but had been stopped by the strong and stoutly held defences in their front. On the morning of the 2d, having been notified by Meade that Wright and Parke both had broken through Lee's lines, General Humphreys made another assault and this time was successful, capturing the works with the guns and a part of the garrison. He now undertook to follow the retreating brigades under Heth, which had been cut off when Wright broke through Lee's line; but Meade directed him against Petersburg, and leaving General Miles's division to hold Heth, as Miles said he could do, Humphreys turned toward Petersburg with his other two divisions. Miles, ever bold, and now flushed with victory, attacked Heth's force, on which, finding itself thus pressed, turned on him, and although two gallant assaults were made, he was driven back each time, and it was not until the Confederate force was completely flanked that it yielded. Heth meantime had been called to Petersburg to take command of Hill's Corps on the death of that gallant commander.

When the commanders of the Second and Sixth Corps headed their commands for Petersburg it might have appeared to them that with the propulsive force of the victory of the morning they would be able to sweep straight on to the heart of the town. But Lee

was an engineer as well as a soldier. He had long foreseen the issue of this day, and he had an inner line laid down for this contingency. In the crisis of the last few days Lee had endeavored to strengthen his weakened lines to the westward by bringing Longstreet from the north side of the James, where he commanded, to help defend the chief points of attack. On his extreme right where the lines "closed on the Appomattox" the main lines were protected by a creek (Old Town Creek), while a half mile or more to the front lay advanced works in which were two redoubts, Forts Gregg and Whitworth, which commanded the ground about them, including the forks into which the Boydton Plank Road divides as it approaches Petersburg. They were not large nor heavily garrisoned, only some two hundred and fifty men and two or three guns in each, but the men were picked men and were put there for a purpose and they knew it. That purpose was the same which held the Spartans at Thermopylæ. In Fort Gregg were detachments from two of Hill's Brigades (Thomas's and Lane's) and one of Gordon's (Harris's). The remainder of Harris's Brigade was in Fort Whitworth, which lay nearest to the Appomattox. In the main line of works, stretching on either side, lay "Field's Division of Longstreet's Corps, two of Gordon's Brigades, and some of Wilcox's troops." Against these lines were now thrown the columns of Ord and Wright. Foster's division of Gibbon's corps charged Fort Gregg, but found it more stoutly defended than they had counted on, and on their repulse Turner's brigades were sent to their support. The fight for these forts was one of the most desperate of the whole

war, and when finally Gibbon's men poured over the parapet of Fort Gregg, which had been almost completely surrounded, they left the space about it like that in front of Fort Whitworth, strewn with the dead and wounded, and the remainder of the garrison that was left alive within the fort was not conquered until after "several determined dashes with the bayonet."

With the fall of Fort Gregg, Fort Whitworth, attacked as it was, was no longer tenable, and Wilcox withdrew such of the garrison as survived to the main lines.

The possession of these commanding forts by the enemy rendered these lines no longer tenable against the overwhelming forces massed against them, with the impulse of victory upon them, and the end of the long struggle for the possession of this gateway of Richmond was now a matter of but a few hours.

General Gibbon, who declared that the assault upon Fort Gregg was one of the most desperate of the war, reckoned his own losses, most of which occurred around these two works, at 714 officers and men.

Thus, even to the last, the Army of Northern Virginia showed the temper which Lee had given it in his three years' training, and, overwhelmed by sheer might, fought for every foot of ground before yielding. By a little after sunrise Lee knew that Petersburg and Richmond were lost and that it was all he would be able to do to hold on till night and try to save his army. He so notified President Davis, and advised that Richmond should be evacuated simultaneously with the withdrawal of his troops that night. His telegram was handed to Mr. Davis in St. Paul's Church during the

morning service as he was about to take the communion. He immediately left the church.

It was recognized instantly that something unusual had occurred, and in a short time it was further known from the sinister preparations for its abandonment that Richmond, which through Lee's genius had held out for four years against every assault of war, was lost.

That night the high officials of the Confederate Government left Richmond for Danville. Such military stores and equipment as remained there were destroyed, and from the fire a large part of Richmond was burnt over, thus adding to the terrors of evacuation the horrors of a vast conflagration.

While Richmond was not unnaturally in a panic and the Confederate Government in confusion, Lee himself, lying in the face of an overwhelming army in the flush of final victory, was as serene as if he were the victor himself. At three o'clock in the afternoon, Lee wrote Mr. Davis a letter which not only casts a vivid light on the general situation, but shows the serenity and indomitable character of his mind. It deals first with the matter of recruiting negro troops, then reports Pickett's defeat at Five Forks, and finally states his own views as to the abandonment of the James River line.

PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA, 3 P. M., *April* 2, 1865.

HIS EXCELLENCY, JEFFERSON DAVIS,
*Richmond, Virginia.*

*Mr. President:* Your letter of the 1st is just received. I have been willing to detach officers to recruit negro troops, and sent in the names of many who are desirous

of recruiting companies, battalions, or regiments, to the War Department. After receiving the general orders on that subject establishing recruiting depots in the several States, I supposed that this mode of raising the troops was preferred. I will continue to submit the names of those who offer for the service and whom I deem competent to the War Department; but, among the numerous applications which are presented, it is difficult for me to decide who are suitable for the duty. I am glad your Excellency has made an appeal to the governors of the States, and hope it will have a good effect. I have a great desire to confer with you upon our condition, and would have been to Richmond before this, but, anticipating movements of the enemy which have occurred, I felt unwilling to be absent. I have considered our position very critical, but have hoped that the enemy might expose himself in some way that we might take advantage of and cripple him. Knowing when Sheridan moved on our right that our cavalry would be unable to resist successfully his advance upon our communications, I detached Pickett's Division to support it. At first Pickett succeeded in driving the enemy, who fought stubbornly; and, after being reinforced by the Fifth Corps (United States Army), obliged Pickett to recede to the Five Forks on the Dinwiddie Court House and Ford's Road, where, unfortunately, he was yesterday defeated. To relieve him, I had to again draw out three brigades under General Anderson, which so weakened our front line that the enemy last night and this morning succeeded in penetrating it near the Cox Road, separating our troops around the town from those on Hatcher's Run. This has enabled him to extend to the Appomattox, thus enclosing and obliging us to contract our lines to the city. I have directed the troops from the lines on Hatcher's Run, thus severed from us, to fall back

toward Amelia Court House, and I do not see how I can possibly help withdrawing from the city to the north side of the Appomattox to-night. There is no bridge over the Appomattox above this point nearer than Goode's and Bevil's over which the troops above mentioned could cross to the north side and be made available to us; otherwise I might hold this position for a day or two longer, but would have to evacuate it eventually, and I think it better for us to abandon the whole line of James River to-night if practicable. I have sent preparatory orders to all the officers, and will be able to tell by night whether or not we can remain here another day, but I think every hour now adds to our difficulties. I regret to be obliged to write such a hurried letter to your Excellency, but I am in the presence of the enemy, endeavoring to resist his advance.

I am most respectfully and truly yours,

R. E. Lee, *General.*

No one of all Lee's letters casts more light on his character than this. If any question as to the final result lurked in his mind, it is not revealed here. On this last day of the defence of Richmond, he deals with the questions submitted to him relating to his army quite as he might have dealt with them on the morning after Seven Pines, when he first assumed command. In the letter speaks the constant soul of the South, to which she is entitled for all that she has achieved in the history of the country.

From this letter it will be seen that even to the last hour Lee clung tenaciously to his lines to give the Confederate Government time to withdraw from Richmond. Nothing is more characteristic of him than the courtesy with which he closes this last despatch to the President

of the Confederacy, at the very moment when the overwhelming forces of the enemy were sweeping over his last lines of defence.

It is the same spirit which animated him when, at Appomattox, a week later, as he surrendered to Grant, he attired himself as if he were to review his troops.

His letters show his entire appreciation of the difficulty and peril of his situation; but there is not a trace of dismay in all his writing. Never more than now, when he made his last move in the great game of war, did the *mens æqua in arduis*, that mark of noble minds, which ever distinguished him, shine forth in him.

His letter to his wife, on the eve of the movement which was to prove the closing act in the great drama of the war, reflects his serenity amid the rising difficulties which were soon to engulf him. He thanks her for the socks she had knitted for his barefooted and suffering men, encloses for her a life of General Scott, for whom he had a word of old-time affection and esteem, and commends her to God.

That night he executed successfully the difficult movement to which he referred and withdrew his famished troops from their long-held and historic entrenchments.[1]

[1] "The Siege of Petersburg," Capt. W. Gordon McCabe. "Memorial Volume of Army of Northern Virginia."

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE RETREAT TO APPOMATTOX

By nightfall Lee knew that he could no longer remain on the James for another day, and he devoted all his energies to extricating his army. At eight o'clock he began to withdraw from the trenches, and it was late in the night before the last of his infantry moved like shadows through the darkness from the trenches in which valor had made its long and desperate stand against the massed forces of the new era. As he was now hemmed in in a great semicircle, with Grant's army resting on the Appomattox both above and below him, it was necessary to cross the Appomattox to the northward, and, passing up the left bank beyond Grant's army, recross the Appomattox to march southward. It must have been after the letter of the 2d was despatched that General Lee issued his final orders for the retreat which was to commence at dark. The artillery was to be withdrawn first, then the infantry. The wagon-trains were to follow parallel roads to avoid impeding the troops. Having withdrawn his troops on the south side from the lines, he crossed the Appomattox in the darkness by the pontoon bridge and the Pocahontas and railway bridges. Longstreet crossed first with Field's Division, Heth's and Wilcox's Divisions of Hill's Corps, and turned up the river. "Bevil's Bridge,"

which General Lee mentions in his last letter to Mr. Davis, was "out of order," but at Goode's Bridge a pontoon was laid and the army recrossed here to the south bank. Next to Longstreet, who moved by the river road, was Gordon, who followed what was known as the Hickory Road, and next to him came Mahone's Division, which passed through Chesterfield Court House.

So close were the lines of the two armies that Ewell, who commanded the troops to the north of the James, was unable to withdraw until after the moon went down. The wagon-trains on the north side of the James were sent up in the afternoon of the 2d to cross at Richmond, and General G. W. C. Lee, at Chaffin's Bluff, crossed the James at Wilton's Bridge, while Kershaw, with Gary's Cavalry Brigade, dismounted, crossed at Richmond, uniting on the night of the 3d near Tomahawk Church. This column was headed for the railroad bridge at Mattoax Station, on the Richmond and Danville Railroad, which had been repaired for the passage of artillery and troops.

The Appomattox was reached and crossed on the night of the 4th, and the following day the column, which was joined by the naval battalion under Commodore Tucker and the artillery battalion from Howlett's Bluff, moved to the southward to join the rest of Lee's army.

The withdrawal of his army from the immediate contact in which it lay along its whole line with Grant's great army, with every sense quickened and every nerve strained tense to prevent it, was one of the most

skilful movements of Lee's career. On the morning of the 3d of April he had crossed and recrossed the Appomattox with the troops from Petersburg, and having been joined by the other troops, was headed for Amelia Court House, on the Danville Railway, where he had, as stated, ordered supplies to be forwarded from Lynchburg. Everything appeared propitious for the success of the movement, for the troops from the north side of the James followed the next day and reached him duly. But again, by one of the strange fatalities which so often appeared to frustrate the best-laid plans of the Confederate leaders, an unkind fate prevented his success. When he arrived at Amelia Court House, where he should have found his supplies, it was found that the supply train which he had ordered had, indeed, been sent, but by some curious and inexplicable misadventure had been ordered away, and had left hours before. Even if his men, inured to hunger, could stagger on without food, it was imperatively necessary to get feed for his horses, and a day was spent in scouring the already well-swept region to find forage and food, a day which under propitious circumstances should have placed him well beyond the power of Grant to overtake him with sufficient force to hold him. But not less fateful than this was the curious fact that for a third time Lee's complete plan had fallen in the hands of his opponent and had disclosed to him full information as to his movements. As on the upper Rappahannock, in the summer of 1862, Pope accidentally received information of his plan to cut him off from his communications, and, before Sharpsburg, McClellan, through an accident, got

a copy of his plans which led to his advance against him in the South Mountains, so now Grant by a similar fortune came into possession of Lee's entire plan of retreat on Danville. It is stated on the authority of General G. W. C. Lee that on the morning of the 3d, when the Federal troops took possession of Richmond, there was found in some place a letter from Lee which gave his entire route and plan of retreat. This despatch was promptly transmitted to General Grant, and enabled him to counter every move that Lee made and eventually overhaul and surround him with his overwhelming force.[1] General G. W. C. Lee's account of it is as follows:

After I was taken prisoner at Sailor's Creek, with the greater part of the commands of General Ewell and General Dick Anderson, and was on my way to Petersburg with the officers of the three commands, we met the United States engineer brigade under command of General Benham, whom I knew prior to the breaking out of the war as one of the captains of my own corps—the engineers.

He did not apparently recognize me, and I did not make myself known to him; but he began talking to General Ewell, in a loud tone of voice which could be distinctly heard by all around.

I heard General Benham say, among other things, that "General Weitzel had found, soon after his entrance into Richmond, a letter from General Lee, giving the condition of the Army of Northern Virginia and what he proposed to do should it become necessary to withdraw from the lines before Richmond and Peters-

[1] Mrs. Davis's "Memoir of Jefferson Davis," II, p. 595; also "A Soldier's Recollections," by Dr. R. H. McKim, pp. 265–267.

burg, and that the letter was immediately sent to General Grant. In answer to some doubt expressed by General Ewell or some one else, General Benham replied, "Oh, there is no doubt about the letter, for I saw it myself."

I received the impression at the time, or afterward, that this letter was a confidential communication to the Secretary of War in answer to a resolution of the Confederate Congress asking for information in 1865. When I mentioned this statement of General Benham to General Lee, some time afterward, the latter said, "This accounts for the energy of the enemy's pursuit. The first day after we left the lines he seemed to be entirely at sea with regard to our movements; after that, though I never worked so hard in my life to withdraw our army in safety, he displayed more energy, skill, and judgment in his movements than I ever knew him to display before."

G. W. C. Lee.

[A true copy.]

It was not until about three o'clock in the morning of the 3d of April that Grant discovered that Lee had slipped away from his front. There were two routes by which Lee's design of joining Johnston might possibly be accomplished: one, the more direct route, by way of the Richmond and Danville Railroad, the other by way of Lynchburg. Grant took as efficient means as possible to provide for both contingencies; but which route Lee would follow would have been a mere conjecture unless Grant had received the intelligence that he had selected Amelia Court House as his first objective point.

Thus, the letter stating that Lee would march on

Amelia Court House, where he expected to receive supplies, gave Grant precisely the information he needed and enabled him to concentrate all of his energies to seize this point and cut Lee off from the direct route to Danville. Leaving to subordinates the entry into Richmond, the aspiration and destruction of so many hopes, he with characteristic directness applied himself to the work of capturing Lee's force. After a brief interview with Lincoln in Petersburg early in the morning, he proceeded sturdily with the work in hand. Sheridan with the Fifth Corps was directed at daylight to push forward to the westward and, if possible, strike the Danville Railroad between the Appomattox and its point of juncture with the Lynchburg Railroad at Burkeville, some thirty miles to the south-west; while General Meade with the Sixth Corps was to follow Sheridan closely and march on Amelia Court House, and General Ord with the Twenty-fourth Corps and Birney's colored troops and the Ninth Corps was to move directly on Burkeville Junction, along the line of the South-side Railroad.

Longstreet with the head of Lee's column reached Amelia Court House on the afternoon of the 4th of April. Gordon was but four or five miles behind. Mahone's "fine division" was ten or twelve miles away. Anderson, with Fitz Lee guarding his rear, was at Deep Creek, some ten miles distant, where after a sharp engagement between Custer and Fitz Lee at Nimosine Church, to the eastward, Fitz Lee made a stand "in a strong defensive position," with Wise's and Hunton's Brigades in support, and though sharply attacked, held

back Merritt and gave Anderson time to march on to Amelia, which he reached next morning, the 5th. The last of Lee's troops, Ewell's force from the lines beyond the James, including the naval battalion, arrived about noon.

Mahone's Division was now assigned to Longstreet, while Anderson retained Bushrod Johnson's Division and what remained of Pickett's Division. The naval battalion remained with G. W. C. Lee's Division.

Sheridan's advance guard did not strike the Richmond and Danville Railway on the 4th until the late afternoon, when Griffin reached the line at Jetersville and Crook struck it at a point some miles south of Jetersville, toward Burkeville Junction. Here Sheridan learned of Lee's presence at Amelia Court House, eight miles away.

The Fifth Corps entrenched to await reinforcements, while Mackensie of the Twenty-fifth Corps advanced his cavalry to within four miles of the Court House.

The Second and Sixth Corps, having to give way to the cavalry, did not reach Deep Run until night, and the first of them did not reach Jetersville till in mid-afternoon of the 5th, while the Sixth was yet later.

Had Lee been able to procure rations at Amelia as he had expected, he might have brushed aside the cavalry force which Sheridan interposed between him and Burkeville and have continued his march to Danville, with the Danville Railroad to keep him supplied, and thus, probably, have escaped. As it was, he marched on the 5th straight for Danville, certain that he could sweep Sheridan from his path. Precious

hours, however, had been lost and Sheridan had now been reinforced. Learning from his cavalry (W. H. F. Lee's) division that "Sheridan had been heavily reinforced," he countermarched a short distance and turned westward on the road to Farmville, by way of Amelia Springs, Deatonsville, and Rice's Station.

With this in view Lee, selecting a few of the best-equipped battalions of artillery to accompany the troops, had sent the rest of his artillery (under General Lindsay Walker) toward Lynchburg by a road lying to the north-west of that which the infantry followed, and his wagon-train moved on his right flank by a road yet nearer the Appomattox. The infantry and cavalry thus protected the artillery and wagon-trains. That afternoon, however, Crook's cavalry, scouting toward the Appomattox to ascertain Lee's lines of march, came on and destroyed one of these wagon-trains. It is said that General Lee's head-quarters wagon with most of his papers was among those thus destroyed.

General Lee, himself, stated, however, that all his "records, reports, returns, etc., with the head-quarters of the army were needlessly destroyed by the clerks having them in charge on the retreat from Petersburg, and such as had been forwarded to the War Department in Richmond were either destroyed in the conflagration or captured at the South in the attempt to save them."[1] General Fitzhugh Lee's head-quarters wagon was burned, which probably gave rise to the report that General Lee's wagon had been destroyed.

[1] Letter to W. B. Reid, of Philadelphia, Pa., in "Recollections and Letters of General Lee," by R. E. Lee, p. 219.

Lee, having turned toward Lynchburg, marched all the night of the 5th, hoping to get beyond the possibility of being overtaken, and by morning had passed beyond Grant's left on the Danville Road, where he had been disposing his advanced corps to attack him. Longstreet, who was in front, had by sunrise reached Rice's Station, on the Lynchburg Road, where he was soon joined by General Lee, and later by Fitz Lee's Cavalry from Amelia Springs, while Anderson, Ewell, and Gordon were following in the order named. General Meade, who had been marching on Amelia Court House, finding that Lee had passed him, turned the Army of the Potomac about and started westward in pursuit, heading the Second Corps, with the Sixth following it, for the cross-roads at Deatonsville, the Fifth Corps, by the road for Paineville, on its right.

Although Lee had again passed beyond Grant, he could not keep ahead of him, for his army was now in a state of complete exhaustion, exhaustion of everything save the spirit of fight. This they retained in full measure, as they were ready to show on every occasion which presented itself. The attack on Petersburg began on the night of the 1st. It was now the 6th, and there had not been an hour's cessation of the struggle. With frames enfeebled by the long strain of the winter, in constant battle-line in the trenches without adequate food or shelter, they had now been fighting or marching through bottomless mud for five days without food save what could be secured by foraging in the naked region through which they passed.

On the road to Deatonsville, beyond Flat Creek,

Gordon, who was covering Lee's rear, found himself harassed by a pursuing force which proved to be the Sixth Corps, and all day this gallant command fought as it marched to hold back the pursuers and give Lee time to save the army. Every defensive position in the broken country was seized and held until it was carried by assault, when they would fall back only to repeat the manœuvre at the next opportunity. But the losses were heavy and the strain on the men disheartening.

About four miles west of the cross-roads at Deatonsville a stream known as "Sailor's Creek" runs northward through a little valley to the Appomattox, and on the higher land on the east side above the valley the road from Deatonsville to Rice's Station and Farmville divides, one fork running northward above the valley, the other keeping on west across the creek to Rice's Station. Here Anderson formed line of battle, covering the cross-roads for which Sheridan, with tireless energy, was pushing with a view to cutting off the trains which moved on Lee's right. Crook attacked him here about noon, hoping to break through and strike the trains, but was driven back, and here later Merritt came up and with Crook made another assault, only to be again beaten off by Anderson, who was now reinforced by the advance troops of Ewell. Every move was now in the face of the enemy, and it was necessary to cover and protect the baggage trains on the right, so that the Confederate forces were disastrously impeded. The men were exhausted, and many were unable, from want of food and sleep, to stand on their feet. Gordon, guarding the rear, arrived at the

fork above Sailor's Creek a little later, and Anderson, relieved of the guard of the cross-roads, continued his march and, followed by Ewell, crossed the creek by the direct road to Rice's Station, while Gordon, who stood guard during the passage of the trains, after they had crossed moved along the eastern fork of the road to cross the creek at Perkinson's mill, a few miles lower down Sailor's Creek, on the road to Farmville by High Bridge, the point at which the Lynchburg Railway crossed the Appomattox and where there was a wagon bridge. His pursuit was taken up by the Second Corps, while Sheridan followed the troops on the Rice's Station Road, with the Sixth Corps behind him. Ewell, following Anderson, having crossed the creek on the direct road to Rice's Station, was hotly pursued by the Sixth Corps and Sheridan's cavalry, and formed on a crest on the west side to cover the road, Kershaw on his right, G. W. C. Lee on his left, the navy battalion in reserve.

Sheridan, having pushed across the creek and passed beyond the Confederates, posted his cavalry across the road to Rice's Station, in front of Anderson, while Wright's corps (the Sixth) formed line of battle across the creek and opened with artillery on Ewell, on the crest on the opposite side. The latter had only some 3,000 men and no artillery and was in the act of preparing to unite with Anderson to dislodge the cavalry from his front when the Sixth Corps came upon them. Seymour's and Wheaton's divisions attacked them in flank, Getty in front, with the artillery sweeping them with a deadly fire, and Sheridan's dismounted cavalry

in their rear. It was one of the most furious fights of the war, finally becoming a hand-to-hand conflict in which the Confederates, though surrounded and without artillery, fought with desperation; but the issue could not be doubtful, and finally, surrounded on all sides by overwhelming numbers and their ranks decimated by the fire from every direction, almost the whole of Ewell's command surrendered, as did nearly half of Anderson's command. The rest, some 250 of Kershaw's Division, who promptly formed a battalion, and about half of Anderson's men, made their way to Rice's Station, having been met on the road by Mahone's Division, which Longstreet sent back to their assistance. The losses comprised, of Ewell's command, some 3,000 men, and of Anderson's command, nearly as many more, and included six generals captured, viz., Generals Ewell, Kershaw, Custis Lee, Dubose, Hunton, and Corse.[1]

That night (the 6th) Lee moved on to Farmville with the force that remained to him—Longstreet's and Gordon's commands, with the remnant of Ewell's—Fitz Lee's Cavalry bringing up the rear. Longstreet and Fitz Lee crossed the Appomattox at Farmville, Gordon and Mahone at High Bridge, four or five miles below, and marched thence by the railroad line to the town, having only partially destroyed the railroad bridge before the enemy came up. On the way to the river they met a small force of cavalry under Colonel Washburne and two small regiments of infantry under

[1] General E. P. Alexander states the losses at 8,000. ("Memoirs," p. 597.)

General Theodore Read, who had been sent forward by Ord to burn the bridges over the Appomattox and were now returning, having been recalled. The small force made a gallant stand to hold back the Confederates, but were soon destroyed, both of the officers named having been killed. But Grant states that their self-devotion enabled him to overtake Lee's army. On the Confederate side General Dearing, Colonel Boston, and Major Thompson were among the killed.

At Farmville rations were found by Lee for the first time since leaving Petersburg, but not all of the troops were served even then, so close on them pushed Sheridan.

Next morning Lee, having destroyed the bridges at Farmville, moved on toward Appomattox on the road to Lynchburg, leaving Grant's main army on the south side of the river, which was nearly unfordable for infantry. Humphreys with the Second Corps, however, was on the north side, having crossed behind Gordon at High Bridge, lower down the river. Gregg's cavalry was with him, while Crook, who had forded the river at Farmville, was now also on the north side.

Lee was moving toward Lynchburg by the Stage and Plank Roads, when the rear-guard skirmishing, which had been constant all the while, increased about midday, revealing a serious attack. Gordon's Corps, which was first assaulted by Barlow, lost some wagons, but gave a good account of itself, driving back the pursuing force. By one o'clock Lee found himself pressed by so large a force that he was forced to form a line of battle to repel the attack, which was successfully done.

It was the Second Corps which had come up and was endeavoring to hold him until the Twenty-fourth and Sixth Corps could cross the river and attack their redoubtable foe from toward Lynchburg. Gregg's Brigade coming up, was charged by Munford and Rosser, and Gregg himself was captured, on which the division was withdrawn. Following Humphreys' lucid account, "he [Miles] suddenly came in contact with the enemy, who opened on him with Poague's sixteen guns; dispositions were at once made for attack, and a heavy skirmish line was pressed close up against the enemy, to develop his position. It was soon found from the prisoners taken that Lee's whole army was present in a strong position covering the Stage and Plank Roads to Lynchburg, which had been entrenched sufficiently for cover and had artillery in place. It was on the crest of a long slope of open ground. Fitz Lee's Cavalry was covering their rear toward Farmville, supported by Heth's Infantry. A heavy skirmish line was pressed against the enemy and an attack threatened with the two divisions, both of which were now up, and an unsuccessful attempt was made to take them in flank. Barlow was now sent for and General Meade informed that Lee's whole remaining force, probably about 18,000 infantry, had been come up with, and suggesting that a corps should attack Lee from the direction of Farmville at the same time that the Second Corps attacked from the opposite direction. Upon this General Meade sent directions for General Gibbon with the Twenty-fourth Corps and General Wright with the Sixth Corps, both of which were then near Farmville,

to cross the river there and attack jointly with the Second Corps." [1]

It was plain now to many of the officers that the situation of the remnant that remained of the army was desperate, and while at Farmville a number of the superior officers got together and held a conference at which it was decided that the cause had become so hopeless that they deemed it wrong to continue the killing of men of both sides and that they should not leave on Lee "the entire trial of initiating the idea of terms with the enemy." General Gordon communicated the sense of this conference to General Lee's chief of artillery, General William N. Pendleton, who had been at West Point with Lee and stood very close to him, and General Pendleton was requested to consult General Longstreet, and then, if he agreed, to convey their views to General Lee. "At first," says General Pendleton, "General Longstreet dissented, but, on second thought, preferred that himself should be represented with the rest." General Pendleton, therefore, sought Lee, who was found "lying alone, resting at the base of a large pine tree." Lee listened quietly, "and then courteously expressing thanks for the considerations of his subordinates in desiring to relieve him in part of existing burdens," said that he trusted it had not come to that; that they certainly had too many brave men to think of laying down their arms. "They still fight with great spirit," he added, "whereas the enemy does not. And besides, if I were to intimate to General Grant that I would listen to terms, he would

[1] "Virginia Campaign of 1864–65," pp. 388, 399.

at once regard it as such an evidence of weakness that he would demand unconditional surrender, and sooner than that I am resolved to die. Indeed, we must all determine to die at our posts."

Pendleton's reply to him was that they were perfectly willing that he should decide the question, and that every man would no doubt cheerfully meet death with him in discharge of duty.[1]

Grant, however, knew as well as Lee's generals to what desperate straits the retreating Confederates were reduced. He knew, further, that while their cause was hopeless, they "still fought with spirit," and he knew that his pursuing force was rapidly getting beyond the reach of supplies. He had no desire to insist on hard terms. What he wished for was peace through the ending of the war. Accordingly, within twenty-four hours of the time when Lee stated to his chief of artillery his conviction that a request to Grant for terms would bring the same reply which had been given by him at Fort Donelson three years before, Grant himself made overtures to him that he should surrender the remnant of his army on honorable terms.

General Grant states that having heard at Farmville of a remark of General Ewell's as to the condition of Lee's army, and having received from Sheridan a letter saying that he was on the way to Appomattox Station to cut off some supply trains which were there awaiting Lee's arrival, the two facts led him to open negotiations with Lee for his surrender.

[1] "Life of William N. Pendleton," by S. P. Lee, p. 402. Fitzhugh Lee's "Life of Lee," p. 392.

Some historians have undertaken to assert that "the conditions were not unequal: that Lee might have withdrawn his army and effected a junction with Johnston, but was outgeneralled by Grant." To support this claim they assign to Lee the highest number of men that by any computation could possibly be assigned to him and take no account of the absent and the disabled.

The latest of these historians, and among the most broad-minded of the class, has assigned to Lee at the beginning of his retreat 49,000 men, against Grant's 113,000, and declares that with "the game escape or surrender the conditions were not unequal, and Lee was simply outgeneralled." [1]

Conditions can scarcely be said to have been not unequal, when Grant, as commander of all the Northern armies, had nearly 1,000,000 men under his command, and Lee, as commander of the Southern armies, had less than 200,000 under his command. If Lee was simply outgeneralled some change must have taken place in the two men, since, with an army never more than 10,000 in excess of the numbers assigned him here,[2] Lee fought through the month of May, 1864, Grant's army of 140,000, defeated him in battle after battle from the Wilderness to Petersburg, caused him losses of 124,000 men, and must have destroyed him but for his inexhaustible resources of men and munition.

But, by the records, the statement quoted is erroneous, and, laying aside the imperfect records of the Con-

[1] Rhodes's "History," vol. V.

[2] In fact, the 49,000 was before the great losses at the end of February.

federate army, the evidence is beyond question that when Lee began his retreat he had only about half of the number of men assigned to him by these historians. Colonel Walter H. Taylor, of his staff, estimates that Lee had, on March 31, 33,000 muskets, and General Lee told General Fitz Lee that he had at that time 35,000 men; "but after Five Forks and in the encounters of March 31, April 1 and 2 he had only 20,000 muskets available, and of all arms not over 25,000 when he began the retreat that terminated at Appomattox Court House." [1]

Whatever may be the numbers shown on records scatteringly made, and, at best, most imperfect, Lee's statement for those who know him settles the question.

But even these men were little more than spectres. Ill-fed, ill-clad, kept for ten months on a constant strain in the face of an army that might at any time mass treble their number on either flank; stretched in a line thirty-five miles in length, every point of which it was vital to hold; wasted by hunger, disease, and cold, these veterans made no plea of being outnumbered. Under Lee they answered every demand and held Grant at bay until not only subsistence, but hope of subsistence, perished.

Even at the last, when Lee recrossed the Appomattox to the south side beyond Grant's lines and directed his course for Amelia Court House, to which point he had ordered provisions to be sent to meet him, had his orders been obeyed, it is the opinion of many competent critics that he might have eluded Grant's pursuit,

[1] Fitzhugh Lee's "Life of Lee," p. 373.

prompt and efficient as it was. But no provisions were there. Some one had blundered. It appears that a provision train had arrived on April 1, but had been fatuously ordered to Richmond. However it was, a day was lost in the effort to obtain subsistence from the depleted countryside for his famished army, men and horses, and in the interval Grant was enabled to come up, and thenceforth, in the light of subsequent events, further retreat was unavailing. From this moment it was merely a question of whether the endurance of his starving force would hold out to march and fight until he had outstripped Grant with his preponderant force possessed of ample subsistence and baggage trains. So great was the confidence of his men in Lee that many of them believed that the retreat was a movement designed by him to draw Grant from his base of supplies with a view to turning on him and destroying him.

Every step was in face of the enemy massing in force under the able direction of men like Meade, Ord, and Sheridan. The fighting was almost hourly, and, while fortune varied, the balance of success was largely with the pursuing forces.

So denuded was the country of all that would sustain life, that men thought themselves well off when a corn-house was found with grain yet left in it and corn was distributed to them to be parched. Even this was not always to be had, and as corn was necessary for the artillery horses, guards were posted where they fed to prevent the men from taking it from the horses. They were reduced to the necessity of raking up the

scattered grains from the ground where the horses had been fed and even to picking the grains from the droppings of the horses. Many of the men became too weak to carry their muskets. Small wonder that they dropped out of the ranks by hundreds! Yet still the remainder kept on, with unwavering courage, unwavering devotion, and unwavering faith in their commander.

In their rags and tatters, ill-clad, ill-shod, ill-fed, ill-armed, and, whenever armed, armed for the most part with the weapons they had captured from brave foes on hard-fought battle-fields, they were the abiding expression of Southern valor and fortitude; the flower of Southern manhood; the pick of every class; the crystallized residue of the Army of Northern Virginia, with which Lee had achieved his fame and on which to future ages shall rest the fame of the South.

Like a wounded lion that spent and wasted army dragged itself across the desolated land, now turning at bay and at every turn leaving its deep mark on its pursuers, now retreating again without haste or fear, and simply in obedience to the instinct of self-preservation, and, at the last, sinking with exhaustion, with crest unlowered, heart undaunted, and face steadfastly set to the foe. As we contemplate their constancy we can but recall Pericles' words over the Athenian dead in the Peloponnesian war: "Thus choosing to die resisting rather than to live submitting, they fled only from dishonor, but met danger face to face, and after one brief moment, while at the summit of their fortune, escaped, not from their fear, but from their glory."

The spring rains had made the roads so deep in that region of deep roads as to be wellnigh impassable to the well-equipped troops of Grant, and operations, just before the evacuation of Richmond, had once to be suspended. To Lee's ill-fed teams they became at times actually impassable, and batteries had to be abandoned because the exhausted horses could not longer pull the guns. In some cases the artillerymen armed themselves with muskets picked up on the march and were formed into infantry companies. But in face of Grant's capital generalship, using his great army to best advantage, attacking and capturing bodies of troops day after day, the end could no longer be doubtful.

Long before, in writing to one of his brothers from Mexico, where he contributed so much to the brilliant victories which ended in the capture of the Mexican capital, Lee had said: "We have the right, by the laws of war, of dictating the terms of peace and requiring indemnity for our losses and expenses. Rather than forego that right, except through a spirit of magnanimity for a crushed foe, I would fight them ten years, but I would be generous in exercising it." [1]

Would it not be likely that this letter should recur to him in this crisis of his life?

In another letter he says, in referring to the terms of peace: "These are certainly not hard terms for Mexico, considering how the fortune of war has been against her. For myself, I would not exact more than I would

[1] Letter to his brother, Sidney Smith Lee, March 4, 1848, cited in Jones's "Life and Letters of Lee," p. 57.

have taken before the commencement of hostilities, as I should wish nothing but what was just." [1]

The continuous fighting held Lee back and enabled Sheridan, followed by Ord, marching by a parallel route, to reach Appomattox Station before him and bar his further progress.

This was the end. The final scene has been depicted so often that there is no need to repeat it here for information, and yet the story of Lee and of Grant is not complete without it. In the two weeks between Lee's desperate effort to break Grant's right and their personal meeting at Appomattox, where Lee's surrender took place, both Lee and Grant reached their zenith. In Lee every high quality which had enabled him to carry the Confederacy on his shoulders for more than two years shone forth. In Grant noble and hitherto unsuspected qualities discovered themselves. At the end he stood forth the Grant of the monuments. If magnanimity be a test, then Americans may well be proud of the victor at Appomattox; if dignity be a test, then Americans may well be proud of the vanquished at Appomattox. History there repeated itself, so that it may be truly said, as was said of Caractacus in the triumphal train of Vespasian, that the dignity of the conquered eclipsed the glory of the conqueror.

In the late afternoon of the 7th of April, General Grant penned his first letter to General Lee, asking the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia. This

[1] Letter cited in Jones's "Lee," p. 54. John Russell Young once told the writer that Grant stated to him that he could not have kept up his pursuit a half day longer.

letter was sent by his adjutant-general, General Seth Williams, to General Humphreys, commanding the Second Corps, who was on the front line in immediate touch with the Confederate rear, and General Humphreys was requested to have it delivered to General Lee. He states that he "sent it at once through his picket line, at the same time authorizing a truce for an hour at that point," in accordance with a request that had been made him by the Confederates to enable them to gather up their wounded that were lying between the lines. This letter was received by Lee about half-past eight in the evening. General Lee's answer was sent back to him within an hour, and, having been delivered to General Williams, was taken at once to General Grant, who was at Farmville.

The two letters containing Grant's demand and Lee's response are as follows:

*April* 7, 1865.

*General:* The result of the last week must convince you of the hopelessness of further resistance on the part of the Army of Northern Virginia in this struggle. I feel that it is so, and regard it as my duty to shift from myself the responsibility of any further effusion of blood by asking of you the surrender of that portion of the Confederate States army known as the Army of Northern Virginia.

U. S. Grant, *Lieutenant-General.*

General R. E. Lee.

*April* 7, 1865.

*General:* I have received your note of this date. Though not entertaining the opinion you express on the hopelessness of further resistance on the part of the

Army of Northern Virginia, I reciprocate your desire to avoid useless effusion of blood, and, therefore, before considering your proposition, ask the terms you will offer on condition of its surrender.

R. E. Lee, *General.*

Lieutenant-General U. S. Grant.

General Grant states that Lee's reply was not satisfactory, but he deemed that it required a further communication, and the following morning he sent his second letter to General Humphreys, who was in advance in the pursuit, to be forwarded through the lines to General Lee. Lee received this letter only in time to despatch his reply in the later afternoon, and it did not reach Grant until about midnight, when he had halted for the night at Curdsville, some ten miles in Lee's rear. These letters run as follows:

*April* 8, 1865.

*General:* Your note of last evening in reply to mine of same date, asking the condition on which I will accept the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia, is just received. In reply, I would say that peace being my great desire, there is but one condition I would insist upon, namely, that the men and officers surrendered shall be disqualified for taking up arms again against the Government of the United States until properly exchanged. I will meet you, or will designate officers to meet any officers you may name for the same purpose, at any point agreeable to you, for the purpose of arranging definitely the terms upon which the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia will be received.

U. S. Grant, *Lieutenant-General.*

General R. E. Lee.

*April* 8, 1865.

*General:* I received at a late hour your note of to-day. In mine of yesterday I did not intend to propose the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia, but to ask the terms of your proposition. To be frank, I do not think the emergency has arisen to call for the surrender of this army, but as the restoration of peace should be the sole object of all, I desire to know whether your proposals would lead to that end. I cannot, therefore, meet you with a view to surrender the Army of Northern Virginia, but as far as your proposal may affect the Confederate States forces under my command, and tend to the restoration of peace, I should be pleased to meet you at 10 A. M. to-morrow on the old Stage Road to Richmond, between the picket lines of the two armies.

R. E. LEE, *General.*

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL U. S. GRANT.

Grant, meanwhile, had given orders to Humphreys to continue the pursuit; but Humphreys, after having resumed the march, "finding his men dropping out of the ranks from exhaustion, owing to want of food and to fatigue, halted the head of his column at midnight, after a march of twenty-six miles," about three miles in the rear of Longstreet's troops.

A proposal was made to Lee by General E. P. Alexander that the army should scatter and make its way to Johnston by various routes. This plan Lee promptly disposed of. He declared that they had no right as Christian men to consider only how the surrender would affect them—they must consider its effect on the country as a whole, and, after explaining his views of the demoralizing effect of such a course, he added

that he would go to General Grant and surrender himself, though he went alone, and take the consequences of his acts.[1]

On the 8th of April orders were issued for a last effort. The artillery was directed to be brought up during the night and massed with a view to breaking through Grant's forming lines, and steps were taken to deliver battle once more. All night the men toiled, but next morning the officer charged with the task [2] notified Gordon that his utmost efforts had been able to bring up only two batteries—the rest of the artillery had taken another route and could not be reached—the horses of the other batteries available were gone; the residue of that artillery which had once helped to make the artillery duels of Lee and Grant the fiercest in the records of war was silenced forever.

On this small fragment of his once redoubtable artillery, and on the remnant of his infantry and cavalry, one more call was made by Lee. As the sun rose on the morning of the 9th of April, the worn and wasted squadrons, with a response as prompt and generous as in the best days of his most victorious campaigns, advanced to their last charge to drive for the last time their foes before them. The first onset was successful. Sheridan's cavalry was driven back in confusion and the situation was possibly saved only, as the supporting general himself stated, by the timely arrival of Ord, the commander of the Army of the James, with

[1] "Military Memoirs of General E. P. Alexander," p. 605.

[2] Colonel Thomas H. Carter, a gallant and efficient soldier and Lee's near kinsman.

abundant troops to bar the way.[1] And Gordon sent Lee word that he had fought his troops "to a frazzle," and could do nothing more unless heavily supported by Longstreet's Corps. "Then," said Lee, "there is nothing left for me but to go and see General Grant, and I would rather die a thousand deaths." But he went, and by this act he saved the South from the horrors of Jacobinism.

On the morning of the 9th, General Grant, who was still at Curdsville, wrote, and forwarded through General Humphreys, his third letter to General Lee. It is a noble letter:

*April* 9, 1865.

*General:* Your note of yesterday is received. I have no authority to treat on the subject of peace. The meeting proposed for 10 A. M. to-day could lead to no good. I will state, however, general, that I am equally anxious for peace with yourself, and the whole North entertains the same feeling. The terms upon which peace can be had are well understood.

By the South laying down their arms they will hasten that most desirable event, save thousands of human lives, and hundreds of millions of property not yet destroyed.

Seriously hoping that all our difficulties may be settled without the loss of another life, I subscribe myself, etc.,

U. S. GRANT, *Lieutenant-General.*

GENERAL R. E. LEE.

[1] "Ord left Petersburg with 20,000 troops, all arms; Fifth Corps, 15,973 (report of March 31, 1865); Sheridan's cavalry, 13,810; to which add 1,000 for the Fifth Corps Artillery, makes 50,783." (Fitzhugh Lee's "Life of Lee," p. 388, note.)

This letter was received by General Lee as he was on his way toward his rear to meet the appointment he had suggested for that day at ten o'clock on the Old Stage Road to Richmond, should Grant have seen fit to act affirmatively on the suggestion. As soon as he had read the letter, Lee dictated a reply to it, Colonel Marshall, of his staff, acting as his amanuensis. This letter, which was written about nine o'clock in the morning, was then despatched by Colonel Whittier "with verbal messages to General Grant from General Lee expressive of regret at not having met him," and ran as follows:

*April* 9, 1865.

*General:* I received your note of this morning on the picket line, whither I had come to meet you and ascertain definitely what terms were embraced in your proposal of yesterday with reference to the surrender of this army. I now ask an interview in accordance with the offer contained in your letter of yesterday for that purpose.

R. E. Lee, *General.*

Lieutenant-General U. S. Grant.

This letter was delivered by Colonel Whittier to General Meade at about ten o'clock, and was forwarded by him to General Grant, who had ridden in the direction of Appomattox Court House and had taken a cross-road for this purpose. Grant was overtaken at a point about eight miles from Appomattox Court House, and immediately wrote his reply to General Lee. Though Lee had declared to General Alexander his conviction

that Grant would offer as good terms as he was entitled to receive, as he now awaited his reply with Longstreet beside him, he, as Alexander says, could not feel confidence that Grant "might not demand unconditional surrender." And as Grant's messenger approached, the last thing said was by Longstreet, who knew no fear: "General, unless he offers us honorable terms, come back and let us fight it out." [1] It was the spirit of the South. But Grant was not less noble. He had resolved to do all he could to spare a vanquished foe. He offered terms not only honorable, but magnanimous. His last note was as follows:

*April* 9, 1865.

General R. E. Lee, *Commanding C. S. A.:*

Your note of this date is but this moment (11.50 A. M.) received. In consequence of my having passed from the Richmond and Lynchburg Road to the Farmville and Lynchburg Road, I am, at this writing, about four miles west of Walker's Church, and will push forward to the front for the purpose of meeting you.

Notice sent to me on this road where you wish the interview to take place will meet me.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

U. S. Grant, *Lieutenant-General.*

On the receipt of General Grant's last note, which was brought to him by Colonel Babcock, of Grant's staff, General Lee, accompanied by Colonel Marshall, of his staff, Colonel Babcock, and a mounted orderly, rode into the little village of Appomattox Court House, and, requesting of Mr. McLean, of that place, to be

[1] E. P. Alexander's "Memoirs," p. 609.

allowed the use of his sitting-room, awaited General Grant's arrival. Here, after a meeting which was so pleasant that Grant says he was in danger of forgetting the business that had called them together, the terms of the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia were quickly arranged. Grant, taking his seat at a marble-topped table in the centre of the room, quickly drafted the terms, and upon the paper being handed to Lee, who sat at a small table by a window, the latter drafted his acceptance of them. They are as follows:

Appomattox Court House, Va., *April* 9, 1865.

*General:* In accordance with the substance of my letter to you of the 8th inst., I propose to receive the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia on the following terms, to wit: Rolls of all the officers and men to be made in duplicate, one copy to be given to an officer to be designated by me, the other to be retained by such officer or officers as you may designate. The officers to give their individual paroles not to take up arms against the Government of the United States until properly exchanged, and each company and regimental commander sign a like parole for the men of their commands. The arms, artillery, and public property to be parked and stacked and turned over to the officers appointed by me to receive them. This will not embrace the side arms of the officers nor the private horses or baggage. This done, each officer and man will be allowed to return to his home, not to be disturbed by United States authority so long as he observes his parole and the laws in force where he may reside.

U. S. Grant, *Lieutenant-General.*

General R. E. Lee.

HEAD-QUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
*April* 9, 1865.

*General:* I received your letter of this date, containing the terms of the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia as proposed by you. As they are substantially the same as those expressed in your letter of the 8th instant, they are accepted. I will proceed to designate the proper officers to carry the stipulation into effect.

R. E. LEE, *General.*
LIEUTENANT-GENERAL U. S. GRANT.

The attitude of the commanding generals toward each other at the close of the surrender is one on which the outside world gazed with astonishment, and to which we may all look back with pride.

General Long in his memoirs of Lee relates an anecdote which casts a pleasant light on the situation. It appears that on the afternoon of the day of the surrender, Meade paid a friendly visit to Lee at his headquarters, and in the course of conversation "Lee turned to Meade, who had been associated with him as his officer of engineers of the 'old army,' and said pleasantly: 'Meade, years are telling on you. Your hair is getting quite gray.' 'Ah, General Lee,' was Meade's prompt reply, 'this is not the work of years. You are responsible for my gray hairs.'"

Lee, after his surrender, asked for 25,000 rations, and this is accepted as the number of his army. But the actual number of muskets surrendered on the 9th of April was by his report less than 9,000. Lee had fought his army until it had simply worn away.

Whatever men Lee had on his rolls, whether 10,000, 25,000, or 40,000, they were, in their famished and spent condition, too few to defeat Grant's ably led force, whether that force were 100,000 or 180,000, and Lee, acting in accord with the views of his general officers who had urged on him this course, was right to avail himself of Grant's generous proposal. It is to Grant's eternal honor that he offered him such honorable terms for the surrender of what remained of the Army of Northern Virginia. A detached portion of the cavalry had broken through and started to make its way to Johnston, but Lee recalled the officer in command and informed him that he was included in his surrender.

The greatness of the occasion appears to have lifted Grant to a higher plane than that of the mere soldier from which he had looked apparently unmoved on the sacrifice of the thousands of gallant men and officers who, from the Wilderness to Cold Harbor, had died at his bidding, and from which he had refused with cold calculation the offers of the South to exchange prisoners and had left men to die like sheep in prisons made noisome largely by their numbers.

In the long vigils before Petersburg, faced by a brave and steadfast foe, his mind had apparently been elevated as it mainly became in the presence of a great crisis—as it became years afterward when, clutched fast in the grip of his last and conquering foe, he held death at bay while he completed the remarkable work on which his family were to depend for their support. However this was, his generosity justified Lee's declaration that he would give his army as good terms as

it had a right to expect, and his correspondence with Lee will bear comparison with that of any victor in history.[1]

The following day Lee issued his farewell address to his army:

HEAD-QUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
*April* 10, 1865.

After four years of arduous service, marked by unsurpassed courage and fortitude, the Army of Northern Virginia has been compelled to yield to overwhelming numbers and resources. I need not tell the survivors of so many hard-fought battles who have remained steadfast to the last, that I have consented to this result from no distrust of them, but, feeling that valor and devotion could accomplish nothing that could compensate for the loss that would have attended the continuation of the contest, I have determined to avoid

[1] An incident of the surrender, told by Grant to Dr. Fordyce Barker, was related by him to Dr. William M. Polk. Dr. Barker asked Grant how he felt when he met Lee at Appomattox. Was he not sensible of great elation over his achievement?

Grant replied that, on the contrary, he was sensible rather of humiliation. When he found Lee in full-dress uniform, while he himself was in a simple fatigue-suit—a private's blouse, with only a general's shoulder-straps to denote his rank, and with his boots spattered to their tops—he was afraid that Lee might imagine that he intended a discourtesy to him because of an incident that had occurred in Mexico. General Scott, he said, was exceedingly particular as to all matters of etiquette, and had given orders that no officer should appear at head-quarters without being in full dress. On some occasion thereafter Grant had gone to head-quarters in an ordinary fatigue-uniform, and that not as neat, perhaps, as it should have been, and had reported to Lee, who was at the time serving on Scott's staff. After the business had been transacted, Lee said: "I feel it my duty, Captain, to call your attention to General Scott's order that an officer reporting at head-quarters should be in full uniform."

This incident, said the general, suddenly flashed across his mind and made him uncomfortable lest General Lee should recall it also and imagine that he intended to affront him.

the useless sacrifice of those whose past services have endeared them to their countrymen.

By the terms of the agreement officers and men can return to their homes, and remain there until exchanged. You will take with you the satisfaction that proceeds from the consciousness of duty faithfully performed, and I earnestly pray that a merciful God will extend to you His blessing and protection.

With an increasing admiration of your constancy and devotion to your country, and a grateful remembrance of your kind and generous consideration of myself, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

R. E. Lee, *General.*

On the 12th of April he announced to President Davis the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia.[1] Like all of his papers, it is direct and casts a light on his character. Moreover, it gives the simplest and most authoritative account of the retreat to Appomattox that is on record.

Ten days after Lee's surrender, Sherman, moved thereto by a more generous impulse than had hitherto appeared to inspire him, and plainly influenced by Grant's magnanimity, offered to Johnston terms not more generous but more far-reaching, if possible, than Grant had proposed to Lee, and after a brief period of negotiation, in which Sherman's far-sighted views were scornfully disavowed and rejected by the authorities in Washington, just unbridled by the tragic death of Lincoln, Johnston surrendered on the same terms that Lee had accepted.

In this convention all the remaining forces of the

[1] Report to be found in the Appendix.

South were included, and, in so far as the South could effect it, the war was over. The war, however, practically ended when Lee surrendered his army at Appomattox.

The highest tribute to this army is the simple fact that with its surrender the war was over. The fortunes of the Confederacy had been nailed to its tattered standards and with them went down.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### GENERAL LEE AND THE CONFEDERATE GOVERNMENT

The student of the Civil War will be likely to reach the conclusion that for at least the last two years of the struggle General Robert E. Lee carried the fortunes of the Confederacy on his shoulders.

It will possibly always be a question how far Lee's military operations were affected by his relation to the Confederate Government, and to what extent he was interfered with by the Richmond authorities. That he was much hampered by them seems quite certain, both from the nature of his subordinate relation to Mr. Davis and from the interference which is continually disclosed in the correspondence that took place between them.

The great generals of history have almost invariably had a free hand in their campaigns and have been able to call to their aid all the powers of their government. Alexander, Cæsar, Hannibal, Cromwell, Frederick, Napoleon were supreme wherever the interests of their armies were concerned. Turenne, Eugene, and Wellington had the fullest and most absolute backing of their governments. Moreover, they lived under different conditions from those of our time and subsisted their armies on the countries in which they operated. Until Grant received command the Union generals were

hopelessly interfered with by the Washington government, and it was only when Grant stipulated that he should be commander in fact as well as in title that success, after long delay, rewarded the Northern arms.

On the Southern side, though the interference was never so flagrant, and though Lee appears to have always had the confidence of President Davis, and, from the time when he assumed command of the Army of Northern Virginia, to have had that of the Confederate Government, yet it is a question whether the interference, or, what was equally disastrous, the lack of prompt, practical, and efficient support on the part of the government, was not in the end as fruitful of misfortune. Colonel Henderson, in his "Life of Stonewall Jackson," declares that "a true estimate of Lee's genius is impossible, for it can never be known to what extent his designs were thwarted by the Confederate Government."

It may, indeed, be said briefly that a confederated government based frankly on the supreme power of the civil government over the military is not one under which a revolution can be fought out with best results. In the constitution of things the Confederate Government of the Southern States was inefficient to carry on such a war as that between the States. Each State was of equal dignity and authority with the others. Each one was of more importance in its own eyes than any of her sisters. Most of them were at times seriously, if not equally, threatened, and it was quite natural, when States' Rights were the corner-stone of the confederation, that each one should feel that her own interests

were to her paramount to those of her sister States. Certainly, this was the case, and at times, particularly toward the close of the struggle, more than one of the South Atlantic States was in a ferment of opposition to the Richmond authorities bordering on secession.

The Confederate Government, indeed, was founded on certain principles of civil equality, which, however sound in themselves and making for liberty, yet furnished but a cumbrous machine with which to carry on a war. Theory, extending to dogma, controlled the minds of its legislators and of its officials. A few instances will illustrate this.

The war on the Southern side was conducted on the dogma of constitutional rights, and thus was limited during its earliest and most propitious stages to repelling invasion. No victory—not even one as complete as Bull Run—was considered to give warrant to invade non-seceded States, and while the government at Washington was with a strong hand breaking up sessions of the Maryland Legislature, making wholesale arrests and flooding the territory of "neutral" Kentucky with armed forces to prevent her seceding, the armies of the South were held on the south side of the Potomac and the Ohio until the time had expired when they might, by an advance, have changed the destiny of the States and of the country.

The Confederate Government had theories about cotton; theories about political economy in which cotton played a controlling part; theories about the necessity of the South's being recognized by the leading powers of Europe. They held the opinion that not

only the North, but Europe, was dependent on cotton —"King Cotton," as it was termed. To control the supply of cotton and withhold it from Europe was, in their opinion, to compel the recognition of the Southern Confederacy by Great Britain and France. Thus, though the Southern armies starved and supplies could have been had for cotton, the government forbade the transactions which might have relieved the situation, and while the ports of the South were being steadily sealed up, one after another, by blockade squadrons, and the cotton was being captured, abandoned, or burned, they still followed to the end the fatal *ignis fatuus* of foreign intervention, and failed to utilize to the utmost their own resources. The leaders were more high-minded than practical.

The Confederate Government had theories of finance. So, though the necessaries of life in the region where the war was carried on rose till it was said that it took a basketful of bills to buy in the market a pocketful of food, they went on printing the money. In this they were ably seconded by the printing establishments of the North, which at times did a thriving business printing Confederate bills. Lee is said to have had meat on his table only twice a week on principle, and he protested against the order allowing officials in Richmond to get government meat at government prices while the men "in the field were on starvation rations," but was overruled in the matter. Lee advocated at one time making Confederate money a legal tender, but this did not commend itself to those who controlled the Confederate finances.

In fact, the Confederate Government—by which is signified its officials—had theories about nearly everything—on which, indeed, they were quite willing to stake their lives, if this would have done any good.

Unfortunately, however, these views, whatever their soundness in the abstract, when put to the practical test in the crucible of war did not result in success, and the sincerity with which they were held did not add to their value. Lee's army starved and dwindled while the Confederate Congress debated and debated, often debating for weeks the most important measures till the exigency of the occasion had passed and the necessity for the particular action debated had been crowded from the stage by some new demand. Mr. Davis, in his Message to Congress on the 13th of March, 1865, complains of the "long deliberation and protracted debate," which caused a delay that "in itself was a new source of peril." Even when earlier there had been abundant supplies in the country, and the transportation was fully adequate, these "were not under control." It was not, indeed, until March, 1865, that the railroads were taken by the government. Up to this time no right was asserted.[1] Yet, that the public men of the South were in the main good, high-minded, and patriotic men there can be no doubt. The truth was that such a form of government was not suited to the needs of a revolution. What was required was the power to direct vested in one man responsible for the result. This was recognized at the time by many. The Confederate Congress in the early

[1] Letter of Judge John A. Campbell.

spring of 1862 passed an act creating the office of commander-in-chief with a view to having the conduct of the military operations free from the control of the civil power. This bill Mr. Davis vetoed as unconstitutional—as indeed it was—but he "assigned" General Lee "to duty at the seat of government and under the direction of the President," where he was "charged with the conduct of military operations in the armies of the Confederacy." The first clause of this order governed the whole. He was "under the direction of the President." And the President exercised his authority. No strategy on a grand scale could be attempted without securing the approval of the Richmond authorities.

The chief disaster, perhaps, was the persistent policy of the government to attempt to hold all of the South instead of adopting the military policy, urged by Lee, of concentrating its armies and dealing the adversary a crushing blow. Joseph E. Johnston, when in command, proposed a campaign for the invasion of the North, in which Beauregard agreed with him; but the plan was not in accordance with the views of the Confederate Government and was rejected. Later on, Lee likewise was hampered in the same fashion, and to the end submitted his most far-reaching plans to the President for the approval of the government. It was a matter of common repute that toward the close of the struggle people constantly discussed the advisability of vesting in General Lee the power of dictator. Lee would have been the last man in the Confederacy to consent to this; but possibly it was the only way in

which the South could have achieved its independence. It would, at least, have prevented the interference which kept the armies from reaching their highest efficiency.

When, after the expedition to Romney, the Richmond government, through Mr. Benjamin, the Secretary of War, on a remonstrance of subordinate officers in Loring's command, reversed an order of Stonewall Jackson's, and directed him to recall Loring's force from Romney, Jackson complied promptly with their instruction and then tendered his resignation. Johnston, who had likewise been slighted, remonstrated with him, but Jackson said that "the authorities in Richmond must be taught a lesson or the next victims of their meddling will be Johnston or Lee." They learned the lesson so far as not to go again to such an extreme, but they meddled much in a different way, and both Johnston and Lee were the "victims." Johnston, who commanded in Georgia, in 1864, was finally, in response to public clamor, removed from his command at the most critical period of his campaign, and with results so disastrous to his command that, whatever the alternative, nothing could have been worse. Happily for Lee's peace of mind, he was of a temper and held views as to the relative province of the civil and military authority which prevented friction and saved him all heart-burning. "As obedient to law as Socrates," was well said of him. If the law empowered others with authority he recognized it as fully as they themselves and governed his course accordingly. He did his duty and left consequences to God.

But this did not alter the unhappy mistakes made in Richmond.

He differed with the authorites radically on many vital matters, as may be gathered inferentially from his correspondence and action, but he neither interfered nor criticised. His duty, as he apprehended it, was to obey those above him and command those under him. He was a soldier, and as a soldier he handled his army, leaving the rest to those on whom the responsibility devolved. The difference at times touched him nearly, for it touched his army. The authorities believed in the popular election of officers by their men. Inasmuch as the government of the Confederate States was a free government, based on the will of the people, it was decided that her soldiery, as free citizens of a republic, should have the privilege of electing their officers below the rank of brigadier-general; this, too, in the face of the enemy and though the election was destructive of discipline. Lee knew that it would result in demoralization, but his reference to it was simply that we are "in the midst of the fermentation" incident to the reorganization of the army. Many of the most efficient and experienced officers of the line were, in fact, thereby deprived of their commands and supplanted by men who might never have worn a sword and "smelt damnably of the halberd." The Confederate authorities believed that England and France would certainly come to the aid of the South after "the *Trent* affair." Lee foresaw with clearer vision that the Federal Government would yield and surrender the envoys with apologies, and in private letters he stated the

necessity of abandoning all expectation of foreign intervention and substituting therefore self-reliance and fortitude.

However on questions of vital policy he differed with the civil authorities, he acted under their authority with unabated zeal. For example, on the subject of the employment of the negroes as soldiers, Lee held very different views from those of the authorities at Richmond. Many of them had been in the service all along as teamsters, axemen, and farriers, and by the autumn of 1864 the question was seriously debated whether they should not be armed and employed as soldiers. Lee was strongly of the opinion that they should be. He knew as no one else did the importance of filling his depleted ranks. He felt as well as others the difficulties of the measure he advocated, but he believed they could be overcome. He knew that the enemy used them by tens of thousands, and that under proper training and command they made good soldiers. He felt that it would only be proper to give them the reward of freedom. But on this point the authorities held different views, and the result was destructive.

They had theories about the institution of slavery, and in the main sound theories—moreover, it was a most complex and delicate matter to handle with reference to domestic concerns, and the new complication growing out of war and invasion. So, though the Union armies had mustered in some two hundred thousand negroes, it was not until the winter of 1864–65 when the Army of Northern Virginia had almost perished that it was decided to recruit negroes for service in the field.

The plan was proposed in the autumn, was agitated all winter, and was acted on only as Lee was being forced out of his entrenchments before Richmond, and then in a form which robbed it of the essential feature of granting freedom, which alone could have made it effective. Lee's last letter before Petersburg dealt with this matter.

Lee's views are expressed in a letter which he wrote to a prominent Virginian in February, who had asked his views on the subject.

HEAD-QUARTERS CONFEDERATE STATES ARMIES,
*February* 18, 1865.

HON. E. BARKSDALE,
*House of Representatives, Richmond.*

*Sir:* I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th instant, with reference to the employment of negroes as soldiers. I think the measure not only expedient but necessary. The enemy will certainly use them against us if he can get possession of them; and as his present numerical superiority will enable him to penetrate many parts of the country, I cannot see the wisdom of the policy of holding them to await his arrival, when we may, by timely action and judicious management, use them to arrest his progress. I do not think that our white population can supply the necessities of a long war without overtaxing its capacity and imposing great suffering upon our people; and I believe we should provide resources for a protracted struggle—not merely for a battle or a campaign.

In answer to your second question, I can only say that in my opinion the negroes, under proper circumstances, will make efficient soldiers. I think we could at least do as well with them as the enemy, and he attaches great importance to their assistance. Under

good officers and good instructions, I do not see why they should not become soldiers. They possess all the physical qualifications, and their habits of obedience constitute a good foundation for discipline. They furnish a more promising material than many armies of which we read in history, which owed their efficiency to discipline alone. I think those who are employed should be freed. It would neither be just nor wise, in my opinion, to require them to serve as slaves. The best course to pursue, it seems to me, would be to call for such as are willing to come with the consent of their owners. An impressment or draft would not be likely to bring out the best class, and the use of coercion would make the measure distasteful to them and to their owners.

I have no doubt that if Congress would authorize their reception into service, and empower the President to call upon individuals or States for such as they are willing to contribute, with the condition of emancipation to all enrolled, a sufficient number would be forthcoming to enable us to try the experiment. If it proved successful, most of the objections to the measure would disappear, and if individuals still remained unwilling to send their negroes to the army, the force of public opinion in the States would soon bring about such legislation as would remove all obstacles. I think the matter should be left, as far as possible, to the people and to the States, which alone can legislate as the necessities of this particular service may require. As to the mode of organizing them, it should be left as free from restraint as possible. Experience will suggest the best course, and it will be inexpedient to trammel the subject with provisions that might, in the end, prevent the adoption of reforms suggested by actual trial.

With great respect,

Your obedient servant,

R. E. Lee, *General.*

The proposition to enlist negroes, though introduced in November, was not passed until March, 1865, and then the bill merely authorized the President to accept for service such slaves as the masters might choose to put into military service, and General Lee's recommendation as to their emancipation was not acted on. It came to nothing, and it is quite possible that it might have done so even had the measure been adopted in time; but the delay and the failure to approve General Lee's recommendation illustrate the difficulties with which Lee had to contend in dealing with the government. It was inherent in the existing conditions.

The interference of the government affected even the constituency of his army.

"The government, at the opening of the year 1864," says one familiar with the subject, "estimated that the conscription would place four hundred thousand troops in the field." [1] Lee saw with clearer eyes. The measure not only failed to provide what was expected of it, but by the end of the year it was, in the opinion of Lee, "diminishing rather than increasing the strength of his army." [2]

The pernicious system of details which prevailed contrary to Lee's wishes, and the not less pernicious habit of setting aside the findings of the courts-martial and pardoning deserters contributed to render his difficult position one of yet more extreme difficulty.

Desertions were perilously frequent, and the govern-

[1] "Life of General Lee," by J. D. McCabe (1866), p. 573.
[2] Letter of December 31, 1864.

ment at Richmond prevented the execution of sentence on the culprit. Longstreet protested and Lee endorsed on his protest, "Desertion is increasing in the army notwithstanding all my efforts to stop it. I think a rigid execution of the law is mercy in the end. The great want in our army is firm discipline."

To this, which was referred by the Secretary of War to the President for his information, Mr. Davis, on November 29, 1864, replied: "When deserters are arrested they should be tried, and if the sentences are reviewed and remitted, that is not a proper subject for the criticism of a military commander."

Hardly any fact lets in a clearer light than this on one of the basic difficulties with which Lee had to contend in his titanic task of defending the South. Mr. Davis was so jealous of his constitutional rights that he could insist on them in face of Lee's solemn statement that his army, the chief bulwark of the whole Confederate fabric, was being undermined by the erroneous exercise of the right.

The idea had got abroad that men who left Lee's army could be enrolled for service in organizations nearer home, and under this temptation in the fearful winter of 1864–65 numbers of men left his lines and went to their own States with this in view. Indeed, it might almost be said that toward the latter part of the war the people of more than one of the States to the southward considered themselves so neglected by the government as to be almost ready for open revolt against the Confederacy. At least three States had "passed laws to withdraw from service men liable to it under exist-

ing laws." [1] And as late as the 13th of March, 1865, Mr. Davis sent in a message asking the Congress to provide a law for organizing the militia and empowering him to call them out. He stated in this message that the governor of one State had declared that he had no power to call the militia to cross a county line, while the executive of another State had "refused to allow the militia to be employed in the service of the Confederate States in the absence of a law for that purpose." [2] The government had doubtless done the best that it could do; but it is certain that if it had not lost the confidence of the people at large, it was rapidly doing so. By the end of 1864, all eyes were turned to Lee. He was recognized as the sole hope of the Confederacy. In January, 1865, the Virginia Legislature testified unmistakably its lack of confidence in the general government, and a committee with the speaker at its head waited on the President to inform him of the fact, while a yet more significant omen was the opposition of the Congress. Before the close of the last session of the Congress, they were almost at an open breach, as is shown by the tart reply of the Senate Committee to the President's message of March 13, 1865, taking them to task for their "protracted debate" on vital subjects. Among other resentful charges, they twit him with their having created the office of general-in-chief, without any suggestion from him, "with a view to the restoration of public confidence and the

[1] Letter of Judge John A. Campbell to General John C. Breckinridge, Secretary of War, March 5, 1865.

[2] "The Civil War during the Year 1865," by John A. Campbell, pp. 49, 50.

energetic administration of military affairs." It was apparent at last that some other plan of conducting the war than that which had hitherto been followed was necessary. A change was made in the War Department, and General Breckinridge became Secretary of War, while General Lee was made Commander of the Armies of the Confederacy. The Legislature of Virginia passed a resolution declaring that the appointment of General Robert E. Lee to the command of all the armies of the Confederate States "would promote their efficiency and operate powerfully to reanimate the spirits of the armies, as well as of the people of the several States, and to inspire increased confidence in the final success of our cause." To this Mr. Davis replied with dignity that the opinion expressed by the General Assembly in regard to General Lee had his full concurrence; and that Virginia could not have a higher regard for him or greater confidence in his character and ability than was entertained by him. "When General Lee," he added, "took command of the Army of Northern Virginia he was in command of all the armies of the Confederate States by my order of assignment. He continued in this general command of the Army of Northern Virginia as long as I would resist his opinion that it was necessary for him to be relieved from one of these two duties. Ready as he has ever shown himself to perform any service that I desired him to render to his country, he left it to me to choose between his withdrawal from the command of the army in the field and relieving him of the general command of all the armies of the Confederate States. It was

only when satisfied of the necessity that I came to the conclusion to relieve him of the general command, believing that the safety of the capital and the success of our cause depended, in a great measure, on the retaining him in the command in the field of the Army of Northern Virginia. On several subsequent occasions, the desire on my part to enlarge the sphere of General Lee's usefulness has led to renewed consideration of the subject, and he has always expressed his inability to assume command of other armies than those now confided to him, unless relieved of the immediate command in the field of that now opposed to General Grant."

Mr. Davis, however, had unyieldingly opposed the proposition for Congress to call Lee to the position as an infringment on his consitutional rights, and earlier in the war had, as already stated, vetoed the bill passed for this purpose. Alexander H. Stephens declares that Lee asked to be relieved from the position of responsibility because he had no power. In the imminent danger of immediate collapse it was now agreed that the Congress should provide the position, and the President then appointed Lee to fill it, the order being dated February 5, 1865. The measure even in this form was opposed by many of Mr. Davis's friends, and one of the historians of the time states that on the final passage of the bill fourteen of the President's friends voted against it, and that Mrs. Davis declared that had she been in the President's place, before she would have submitted to the humiliation of being deprived of her rights in this matter she would have been hanged.[1]

[1] McCabe's "Life of General R. E. Lee."

Another difficulty, however, stood in the way. Lee himself had declared that he would not accept the position in opposition to Mr. Davis, but only at his hands. The phrase in his first general order to his armies is significant of his point of view:

HEAD-QUARTERS, CONFEDERATE ARMY,
*February* 9, 1865.

General Order No. 1. In obedience to General Order No. 3 . . . I assume command of the military forces of the Confederate States. . . .

Longstreet declares his astonishment at Lee's failure to exercise the enormous powers now vested in him. But it was too late now for any exercise of power to have changed the issue.

Fortunately for Lee, the relations between him and the President of the Confederacy were ever of the most cordial kind. They had known each other long and well, and each recognized in the other the qualities that ennobled them. During a considerable portion of the war the President kept near him General Lee's eldest son, General Custis Lee, himself an accomplished engineer and soldier. Mr. Davis was a man of the highest character and of absolute devotion to the consitutional principles, to whose preservation he pledged his life and powers. He was a trained soldier, and in the Mexican war had displayed marked dash, courage, and ability as a regimental commander. Moreover, he had had great experience, and as Secretary of War of the United States had made a reputation for breadth of view and

power of organization which to-day places him second to none among those who have held that important office. It was under him that the first regiments of cavalry as an independent arm of the service were organized, and one of these Lee had commanded. Thus the two men knew and respected each other, and when, after the unsuccessful "West" Virginia campaign, Lee was the object of much foolish criticism and clamor, Mr. Davis stood by him and not only relied on him as his military adviser, but, on Johnston's being wounded at Seven Pines, appointed him commander of the army before Richmond—the Army of Northern Virginia. When he assigned Lee to the duty of defending the South Atlantic coast, and protest was made against his choice, he wrote to the governor of South Carolina: "If Lee is not a general, I have none to send you."

"As he was courageous, physically and morally he was a man of convictions—absolutely direct, frank, and positive," says one of his friends of Mr. Davis (General Breckinridge). Or, to use Lee's own expression about him, who ever held him in high and affectionate esteem, he was "very tenacious in opinion and purpose." This, however, did not prevent Mr. Davis's being a doctrinaire, and one whose theories, at times, honest as they were, interfered disastrously with practical action. Possibly he was too positive. At least he had the courage of his convictions, and, conscious of his own rectitude of intention and conduct, he was hard to change. He was subject to strong impressions, and was consequently not only inclined to favoritism, but was liable

to be influenced by persons of strong convictions and determined will who might be about him; and at times he displayed what was not far from sheer obstinacy. He was described by an enemy—and he had many—as "standing in a corner telling his beads and relying on a miracle to save the country." It was not true; but it contained this grain of truth, that he shut his eyes at times to facts plain to other men, and stood firm for a policy which, sound under other conditions, was now destructive. Against all criticism of him—and he was the target for much abuse and adverse criticism—we have Lee's judgment that he did "as well possibly as any other man could have done in the same position."

Toward Lee he was ever considerate and kind, yet he held on to his own power even where Lee was concerned. Lee could only get Major—afterward General—Long promoted to the rank he wished him to have, by appointing him his military secretary, and his request for the appointment of his chief of staff was not granted. And though, as we have seen, Mr. Davis declared afterward in his autobiography that Lee had long been, to all intents and purposes, commander-in-chief of the Confederate States armies, every experienced man knows the vast difference between being the untitled adviser of an official and the responsible official himself.

The difference would have been peculiarly marked in Lee, who never exceeded authority nor shirked responsibility. Had he been commander of all the armies of the Confederacy, Johnston would probably

not have retired from the line of the Rappahannock in 1862. And it is certain that he would not have been relieved from command before Sherman in the summer of 1864. It is also probable that the wellnigh impregnable line of the North Anna would have been selected as the defensive line against Burnside and Hooker instead of the heights of Fredericksburg, which in the judgment of critics, though likewise impregnable, did not present the advantage of a field for efficient pursuit of the defeated assailants. But, quite apart from these errors, had Lee been in supreme command of the armies of the South, his handling of the weapon with which he fought McClellan and Pope and Burnside and Hooker and Grant would have been freer, and probably it would have been a more efficient weapon than it was, as efficient as Grant's casualty list proves it to have been.

Not only was Lee's judgment as to strategy and the disposition of troops, even in the face of the enemy, often in overwhelming force, cramped by the need to defer to the authorities in Richmond; but the very life of the army was subject to the same disastrous influences. Reinforcements, exemption, straggling, desertion, promotion of inferior men and failure to promote superior men, subsistence, and equipment were all dealt with by the Richmond government.

And Lee, already overburdened, was weighted down by the additional burden of having to bow to the inevitable in the form now of political interference, and now of personal incompetence.

Lee repeatedly found himself obliged to write to the

President urging with insistence the absolute necessity of upholding his hands with respect to the suppression of straggling and desertion and other offences that were "injurious to the cause." His urgency appears, as has been stated, to have been taken, in one case at least, as a usurpation of executive authority.

That "an army moves on its belly" has as good authority as Napoleon. But the belly of the Confederate armies was nearly always empty. The commissary-general of subsistence was an old comrade and a favorite with the head of the government, and he had theories as to the regular way in which to gather supplies and subsist an army which nothing could shake. It mattered not that the armies starved and the generals protested. He took orders only from the President, and naught could move him. That he was patriotic and honest did not make amends for his unpractical theories or fill the haversacks of the Confederate soldiery. Johnston said his army had not more than two days' provisions stored, and we know what the necessities of Lee's army were during the years he fought it, and the well-meaning incompetents of the Commissary Bureau undertook with so little success to feed it. Lee at times had not one day's rations. The tale of the killed and wounded in battle may be arrived at with reasonable approximation; the tale of the starved and depleted victims of incompetence will never be imagined. But we know that among the most disastrous consequences of Lee's dependence on the civil authority was his inability to command the production of the necessary supplies for his army. An illustration

may be found in his correspondence with the government at Richmond in the winter of 1863, when his army was at Fredericksburg, after the victory of Fredericksburg and before that of Chancellorsville.

On the 26th of January he wrote to Mr. Seddon, the Secretary of War—himself a high-minded and unselfish patriot of large experience: "As far as I can learn, we have now about one week's supply: four days' fresh beef and four days' salt meat of the reduced ration.[1] After that is exhausted I know not whence further supplies can be drawn. The question of provisioning the army is becoming one of greater difficulty every day. The country north of us is pretty well drained of everything the people are willing to part with, except some grain and hay in Loudoun. Nor can impressment be resorted to with advantage, inasmuch as provisions retained for domestic use are concealed. A resort to impressment would, in my opinion, in this region produce aggravation and suffering among the people without much benefit. But I think if the citizens in the whole country were appealed to they would be willing to restrict themselves and furnish what they have to the army.

"I am more than usually anxious about the supplies of the army, as it will be impossible to keep it together without food."

On this letter the following endorsement was made at Richmond by General L. B. Northrup, the commissary-general of subsistence:

[1] One-quarter pound. Lee's letter to J. A. Seddon, Secretary of War, April 17, 1863.

SUBSISTENCE DEPARTMENT,
*January* 28, 1863.

Fifteen months ago this bureau foresaw that the supply of cattle in Virginia would be exhausted. . . . The meat has held out longer than was expected. . . . The order of the War Department reducing the ration of meat and increasing that of flour as referred to has not been observed in the Army of Virginia for a period of between three and four months by order of General Lee, and the use of the whole beef (necks and shanks included) which was attempted to be instituted by the commissary-general of subsistence has not been observed in that army, the discontent and other obstacles being urged as insurmountable in the field. . . . All the transportation that can be begged will be needed to get wheat to be converted into flour for the same army that now wants meat. General Lee's suggestion that an appeal be made to the citizens to forward supplies is noted by this bureau and is not approved. . . .

Respectfully,
L. B. NORTHRUP,[1]
*Commissary-General of Subsistence.*

Could anything be imagined more tragic than this—a commissary-general disallowing the suggestion of a commanding general as to food for his army, and rebuking him for insubordination?

It is small wonder that Lee's health gave way that winter and that a year later he asked for his son to come and act as his chief of staff, on the ground that he was sensible of a diminution of his strength since this illness.

[1] O. R., VIII, pp. 674, 675. Bigelow's "Chancellorsville Campaign," pp. 33, 34.

Two years after this, Sherman destroyed what he estimated as one hundred million dollars' worth of crops in the South and made other disposition of the transportation which the commissary-general of subsistence could only secure by begging.

All during the winter of 1863 and early spring of 1864, and, indeed, throughout that winter, Lee's official correspondence shows with what clear eyes he viewed the situation and how he was powerless to meet it. From time to time he shows impatience at the publication of his plans through the press, and time and again we discover in his letters the disastrous want of the supplies absolutely needed to enable him to use his army efficiently. Even as far back as the 19th of October, 1863, for example, he writes to Brigadier-General A. R. Lawton, the quartermaster-general at Richmond, and to the Hon. James A. Seddon, the Secretary of War, letters which show this need:

HEAD-QUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
*October* 19, 1863.

LAWTON, BRIGADIER-GENERAL, A. R.,
*Quartermaster-General, Richmond, Va.*

*General:* I have received your letter of the 12th, and am very glad to find that your exertions to supply the army have been so successful. The want of the supplies of shoes, clothing, overcoats, and blankets is very great. Nothing but my unwillingness to expose the men to the hardships that would have resulted from moving them into Loudoun in their present condition induced me to return to the Rappahannock. But I was averse to marching them over the rough roads of

that region, at a season, too, when frosts are certain and snows probable, unless they were better provided to encounter them without suffering.

I should otherwise have endeavored to detain General Meade near the Potomac, if I could not throw him to the north side.

The supplies that you now have at your disposal for this army will be most welcome, and I trust that your exertions to increase them will meet with full success.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. E. Lee, *General.*[1]

Head-quarters Army of Northern Virginia,
19 *October,* 1863.

Hon. James A. Seddon,
*Secretary of War, Richmond, Va.*

*Sir:* I have had the honor to receive your letter of the 16th inst. I am doubtful as yet whether General Meade will remain on the defensive. . . .

If General Meade is disposed to remain quiet where he is, it was my intention, provided the army could be supplied with clothing, again to advance and threaten his positions. Nothing prevented my continuing in his front but the destitute condition of the men, thousands of whom are barefooted, a greater number partially shod, and nearly all without overcoats, blankets, or warm clothing. I think the sublimest sight of the war was the cheerfulness and alacrity exhibited by this army in the pursuit of the enemy under all the trials and privations to which it was exposed. . . .

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. E. Lee, *General.*[2]

On January 2, he writes to the President that he can learn of no supply of meat on the road to the army,

[1] Long's "Lee," p. 629.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 629.

and he fears that he will be unable to retain it in the field. Three days later he writes to the commissary-general, Colonel L. B. Northrup, that he regrets very much to learn that the supply of beef for the army is so nearly exhausted; that no beef had been issued to the cavalry corps by the chief commissary for eighteen months, and that "during that time it has supplied itself, and has now, I understand, sufficient to last until the middle of February. . . .

"I cannot adopt," he says, "your suggestion to employ the organization of your bureau to impress provisions. Neither the law nor regulations of the War Department, in my opinion, give me that power. . . ."

To President Davis, who had written suggesting that he should go to North Carolina and take charge of the expedition to capture Newberne, he writes on the 20th of January: "In view of the opinion expressed in your letter, I would go to North Carolina myself; but I consider my presence here always necessary, especially now when there is such a struggle to keep the army fed and clothed."

On the 3d of February he writes him that "the approach of spring causes me to consider with anxiety the probable action of the enemy, and the possible operations of ours in the ensuing campaign. If we could take the initiative and fall upon them unexpectedly, we might derange their plans and embarrass them the whole summer. There are only two points east of the Mississippi where it now appears this could be done." . . . "We are not in a condition, and never have been, in my opinion, to invade the enemy's coun-

try with a prospect of permanent benefit. But we can alarm and embarrass him to some extent, and thus prevent his undertaking anything of magnitude against us."

On April 12, 1864, he writes to President Davis: "My anxiety on the subject of provisions for the army is so great that I cannot refrain from expressing it to your Excellency. I cannot see how we can operate with our present supplies. Any derangement in their arrival or disaster to the railroad would render it impossible for me to keep the army together, and might force a retreat into North Carolina. There is nothing to be had in this section for men or animals. We have rations for the troops to-day and to-morrow. I hope a new supply arrived last night, but I have not yet had a report. Every exertion should be made to supply the depots at Richmond and at other points. All pleasure travel should cease and everything be devoted to necessary wants."

This letter he follows up on the 15th of April, when he writes the President: "We shall have to glean troops from every quarter to oppose the apparent combination of the enemy. If Richmond could be held secure against the attack from the east, I would propose that I draw Longstreet to me and move right against the enemy on the Rappahannock. Should God give us a crowning victory there, all their plans would be dissipated, and their troops now collecting on the waters of the Chesapeake would be recalled to the defence of Washington. But to make this move I must have provisions and forage. I am not yet able

to call to me the cavalry or artillery. If I am obliged to retire from this line, either by a flank movement of the enemy or the want of supplies, great injury will befall us. I have ventured to throw out these suggestions to your Excellency in order that in surveying the whole field of operations you may consider all the circumstances bearing on the question. Should you determine it is better to divide this army and fall back toward Richmond, I am ready to do so. I, however, see no better plan for the defence of Richmond than that I have proposed."

Subordination to the civil authority was the key to Lee's action throughout the war. It speaks in all of his correspondence and utterances relating to the civil government of the Confederacy. It is found in the very beginning of the war in a letter to Mrs. Lee, where in reply to her suggestion of the rumor that he was to be made commander-in-chief, he stated simply that this position was held by President Davis. It is found at the end of the war in his reply to General Gordon, who, in an interview with him in the beginning of February, 1865, having learned from his lips his view of the almost desperate situation, inquired if he had made his views known to President Davis or to the Congress. He received the reply, states his corps commander, "that he scarcely felt authorized to suggest to the civil authorities the advisability of making terms with the government of the United States. He said that he was a soldier, that it was his province to obey the orders of the government, and to advise or counsel with the civil authorities only upon questions directly affecting his

army and its defence of the capital and the country."[1] Though his administration of every office which he ever filled showed his ability to grapple successfully with whatever problems life presented to him, he was careful to abstain from all that savored of political work. He gave his advice frankly when it was requested; but beyond this held himself scrupulously aloof from interference in political matters. His views on this subject were set forth clearly when on one occasion, toward the end of the war, Senator B. H. Hill, of Georgia, approached him with the suggestion that he should give his views on "the propriety of changing the seat of government and going further South."

His reply was: "That is a political question, Mr. Hill, and you politicians must determine it. I shall endeavor to take care of the army, and you must make the laws and control the government."

"Ah, General, but you will have to change that rule," said the Georgia senator, "and form and express political opinions; for if we establish our independence the people will make you Mr. Davis's successor."

"Never, sir," said Lee; "that I will never permit. Whatever talents I may possess (and they are but limited) are military talents. My education and training are military. I think the military and civil talents are distinct if not different, and full duty in either sphere is about as much as one man can qualify himself to perform. I shall not do the people the injustice to accept high civil office with whose questions it has not been my business to become familiar."

[1] "Reminiscences of the Civil War," General John B. Gordon, p. 390

"Well—but, General," persisted Hill, "history does not sustain your view. Cæsar, Frederick of Prussia, and Bonaparte were great statesmen as well as great generals."

"And great tyrants," replied Lee promptly. "I speak of the proper rule in republics, where I think we should have neither military statesmen nor political generals."

"But Washington was both," urged Hill, "and yet not a tyrant."

"Washington was an exception to all rules and there was none like him," said he, smiling.

It was doubtless this conversation which led Hill in after years, in pronouncing his eulogy on General Lee, to utter the fine saying that "he was Cæsar without his ambition, Frederick without his tyranny, Napoleon without his selfishness, and Washington without his reward."

Lee also held different views from those which controlled in the Confederate civil councils on the more vital subject of proposals for peace.

When he first crossed the Potomac he had in mind the possibility of its leading to negotiations for peace, and so wrote Mr. Davis.[1] And again, on the eve of his second invasion of the North, he addressed to Mr. Davis a letter advocating measures for encouraging "the rising peace party of the North," almost urgent in its terms.[2] "Nor do I think," he wrote, "we should in this connection make nice distinction between those

[1] Letter of September 8, 1862, quoted *ante*.
[2] Letter of June 10, 1863, quoted *ante*.

who declare for peace unconditionally and those who advocate it as a means of restoring the Union, however much we may prefer the former. . . . When peace is proposed it will be time enough to discuss its terms, and it is not the part of providence to spurn the proposition in advance." This was certainly a very different view of the case from that held by the civil rulers in Richmond, who, even as late as the Hampton Roads Conference, were as firm in their demands for independence as on the day after First Manassas. They could not understand that conditions had changed since the preceding summer, and they were still misled by accounts of disaffection at the North and by the *ignis fatuus* of foreign intervention.

Thus we see that however little inclined Lee was to interfere in civil matters, he was ready, at need, to lend his aid to further the cause of peace whenever it was desired by the civil authorities. Such an occasion occurred in February, 1865, and Lee, on finding that it was the wish of the President, acceded to the suggestion to open a correspondence with Grant, who had been reported as desirous to discuss with him the possibility of arriving at a satisfactory adjustment of the unhappy difficulties in the way of a peace settlement by means of "a military convention."

Longstreet, who it appears was first approached on the subject, has given the following account of the negotiations. He states that on the 20th of February, 1865, General Ord, commanding the Army of the James, sent him a note asking him to arrange a meeting with him with a view to putting a stop to the bartering

which went on between the troops on the picket lines; and that inasmuch as Ord knew that he could at any time put a stop to his men doing this by a simple order, he surmised that there must be some other matters which he wished to discuss with him, and accordingly acceded to his request. They met next day between the lines, and presently Ord asked for a "side interview," which was acceded to.

"When he spoke of the purpose of the meeting," says Longstreet, "I mentioned a simple manner of correcting the matter, which he accepted without objection or amendment. Then he spoke of affairs military and political.

"Referring to the recent conference of the Confederates with President Lincoln at Hampton Roads, he said that the politicians of the North were afraid to touch the question of peace, and there was no way to open the subject except through officers of the armies. On his side they thought the war had gone on long enough; that we should come together as former comrades and friends and talk a little. He suggested that the work as belligerents should be suspended; that General Grant and General Lee should meet and have a talk; that my wife, who was an old acquaintance and friend of Mrs. Grant in their girlhood days, should go into the Union lines and visit Mrs. Grant with as many Confederate officers as might choose to be with her. Then Mrs. Grant would return the call under escort of Union officers and visit Richmond; that while General Lee and General Grant were arranging for better feeling between the armies they could be aided by inter-

course between the ladies and officers until terms honorable to both sides could be found.

"I told General Ord that I was not authorized to speak on the subject, but could report upon it to General Lee and the Confederate authorities, and would give notice in case a reply could be made.

"General Lee was called over to Richmond and we met at night at the President's mansion. Secretary of War Breckinridge was there. The report was made, several hours were passed in discussing the matter, and finally it was agreed that favorable report should be made as soon as another meeting could be arranged with General Ord. Secretary Breckinridge expressed especial approval of the part assigned for the ladies.

"As we separated I suggested to General Lee that he should name some irrelevant matter as the occasion of his call for the interview with General Grant, and that once they were together they could talk as they pleased. A telegram was sent my wife that night at Lynchburg calling her to Richmond, and the next day a note was sent General Ord asking him to appoint a time for another meeting.

"The meeting," continues Longstreet, "was appointed for the day following, and the result of the conference was reported. General Ord asked to have General Lee write General Grant for an interview, stating that General Grant was prepared to receive the letter, and thought that a way could be found for a military convention, while old friends of the military service could get together and seek out ways to stop the flow of blood. He indicated a desire on the part of

President Lincoln to devise some means or excuse for paying for the liberated slaves, which might be arranged as a condition and part of the terms of the convention and relieve the matter of political bearing; but those details were in the form of remote probabilities to be discussed when the parties became advanced in their search for ways of settlement."

On the 1st of March, Longstreet wrote General Lee, giving a report of the second interview with Ord, and on the 2d of March, Lee wrote Grant the following letter:

HEAD-QUARTERS CONFEDERATE STATES ARMIES,
*March* 2, 1865.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL U. S. GRANT,
*Commanding United States Armies.*

*General:* Lieutenant-General Longstreet has informed me that in a recent conversation between himself and Major-General Ord as to the possibility of arriving at a satisfactory adjustment of the present unhappy difficulties by means of a military convention, General Ord states that if I desired to have an interview with you on the subject you would not decline, provided I had authority to act. Sincerely desiring to leave nothing untried which may put an end to the calamities of war, I propose to meet you at such convenient time and place as you may designate, with the hope that upon an interchange of opinions it may be found practicable to submit the subjects of controversy between the belligerents to a convention of the kind mentioned. In such event I am authorized to do whatever the result of the proposed interview may render necessary or advisable. Should you accede to this proposition, I would suggest that, if agreeable to you, we meet at the place selected

by Generals Ord and Longstreet for their interview, at 11 A. M. on Monday next.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE, *General.*

This letter was sent to Longstreet open, with instructions to read, seal, and forward. Longstreet, having read it, disapproved of the true object of the interview being so frankly mentioned, and, as he states, "rode into Richmond to ask that some other business should be named as the cause of the call for the interview, but he [Lee] was not disposed to approach his purpose by diplomacy, and ordered the letter to be delivered. He, however, wrote and sent another letter also, which related to the exchange of prisoners, and closed by saying: 'Should you see proper to assent to the interview proposed in my letter of this date, I hope it may be found practicable to arrive at a more satisfactory understanding on this subject.'"

To this proposal of Lee's, Grant replied two days later in a letter, the first part of which related to the question of the exchange of prisoners mentioned in Lee's second note. As to the matter suggested by Ord, he replied, declining the interview, saying:

". . . In regard to meeting you on the 6th instant, I would state that I have no authority to accede to your proposition for a conference on the subject proposed. Such authority is vested in the President of the United States alone. General Ord could only have meant that I would not refuse an interview on any subject on which I have a right to act, which, of course,

would be such as are of a military character, and on the subject of exchanges which has been intrusted to me.

U. S. Grant, *Lieutenant-General.*

It appears that Grant, on receiving Lee's letter, notified the government in Washington, and Mr. Lincoln sent him, through Stanton, on the 3d of March, a telegram instructing him to "have no conference with General Lee, unless it were for the capitulation of Lee's army," or on some minor and purely military matter, and stated further that Grant was "not to decide, discuss, or confer upon any political question."

This third effort which Lee had made to bring about peace having disappeared, Lee went back to his post behind the trenches in which his army, now but a wraith, still held back the foe, in no small part by the awe which its valor and fortitude had inspired. Here, still obedient to the civil government, as he deemed it his duty to be, he held on until swept away by Grant's irresistible numbers ably thrown against him. And even then by a tragic fate he was the victim of the incompetence of the civil authorities. He had successfully accomplished one of the most difficult movements of his career. He had withdrawn his army by night from Grant's front extending against his lines for thirty-odd miles, in places so close that the movement could not be begun till the moon set. He had crossed the Appomattox twice and, marching past Grant's left, was well on his way to Danville when the disastrous consequence of civil incompetence overtook

him. In the first place, as we have seen, a letter in which Lee had stated the condition of his army and his plans to the civil authorities had been left in Richmond and fell into the hands of the Union commander, thus apprising him fully of Lee's route and the desperate condition of his army. And secondly, when Lee reached Amelia Court House, where he had ordered that rations should meet his army, it was found that though they had been sent, the train carrying them had been ordered away again a few hours before his arrival. It used to be charged that this train was ordered back to Richmond to help take away the retiring government officials; but this charge Mr. Davis indignantly denied, and no one has since believed it. As to the effect of this disaster we have Lee's own views given in his final report of the surrender at Appomattox:

". . . Not finding the supplies ordered to be placed there," he says, "nearly twenty-four hours were lost in endeavoring to collect in the country subsistence for men and horses. This delay was fatal and could not be retrieved."

When Lee sheathed his sword the Confederate Government vanished like a morning cloud. Of its policy, he declared, he knew nothing and "had no hand nor part in it." He was only a soldier, obeying his country's laws, and striving with all his might to preserve the blessing of peace.

With this report to the President of the Confederate States the Army of Northern Virginia passed into history.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### LEE'S CLEMENCY

As the years pass by, the military genius of Lee must be more and more restricted to the study of a class. His character will ever remain the precious possession of his kindred and his people. In all the annals of his race none has excelled it.

Possibly Lee's chief, if not his one, fault as a soldier was that he was not always rigorous enough with his subordinates; that is, if such a thing be possible, he was too magnanimous. He took blame on himself where it should rightly have been adjudged to others. Yet, this weakness as a soldier but added to his nobility as a man, and it is as a man that we would now consider him.

While many competent critics in his army were charging Longstreet with having been the cause of the disaster at Gettysburg, Lee gave no hint of dissatisfaction with him. His reports contain no suggestion that he had failed to secure his approval. He wrote him a letter such as only a man of noble nature could have written to an old comrade who had failed him. He showed him a magnanimity which was ill requited when Longstreet wrote his own story of the war.

Among his characteristics his humanity stands forth to distinguish him forever from possibly nearly all his

noted contemporaries. Colonel Charles Marshall, of his staff, who knew him best among men, declares that he never put a spy to death, and the story is well known of his clemency in the case of a deserter who had been found guilty by a court-martial and condemned to death. It was during the terrible campaign of 1864, when the women at home wrote such heart-rending accounts of their want to their husbands in the field, that Lee was compelled to forbid the mails to be delivered. A soldier who had disappeared from his regiment and gone home was arrested and tried as a deserter. His defence was a letter which he had received from his wife, which showed that she and her children were starving. It was held insufficient, and he was sentenced to be shot. The case, however, was so pitiful that it was finally presented to General Lee. Lee's views on the mistaken mercy of reversing courts-martial in cases of desertion have been set forth. In this case, however, he wrote beneath the finding his approval, and then below this an order that the man should immediately rejoin his regiment. There were, of course, unhappily, other instances enough in which discipline had to be enforced, and when the exigency arose he was rock. But, as has been well said by Mr. Charles Francis Adams, possibly his surest and loftiest title to enduring fame was "his humanity in arms and his scrupulous regard for the most advanced rules of modern warfare." [1]

An incident, small in itself but illustrative of the compassionate character of Lee, occurred during one of his fiercest battles. He was standing with officers

[1] Address delivered at Lexington, Va., January 19, 1907.

of his staff in the yard of a dwelling on an eminence, when the group attracted the attention of the enemy and a hot fire was directed on them. General Lee suggested to his companions to go to a less exposed spot, but he himself remained where he was. A little later, as he moved about, he stooped and picked up a young bird, and, walking across the yard, placed the fledgling on a limb.

It was characteristic of him that ordinarily, wherever he might be, he slept in a tent, for fear of incommoding the occupants of the houses he might have taken for his head-quarters, and at times when he was inspecting the long lines from Richmond to Petersburg, he even hesitated to seek shelter at night in the camp of an acquaintance lest he might inconvenience him.[1] On his return from Appomattox he, even at his brother's home, slept in a tent in his yard.

We have seen how in the midst of the arduous duties of commander of the army, he took the trouble to carry out his father-in-law's directions about the manumission of his slaves. He writes later, during the stress of war, to his eldest son: ". . . I hope we will be able to do something for the servants. I executed a deed of manumission embracing all the names sent me by your mother and some that I recollected, but as I had nothing to refer to but my memory, I fear many were omitted. It was my desire to manumit all the people of your grandfather, whether present on the several estates or not. I believe your mother only sent me the names of those present at W.[hite] H.[ouse] and

[1] Long's "Lee," quoting Colonel Thomas H. Carter.

Romancoke. Those that have left with the enemy may not require their manumission. Still, some may be found hereafter in the State, and, at any rate, I wished to give a complete list, and to liberate all to show that your grandfather's wishes, so far as I was concerned, had been fulfilled. . . . I shall pay wages to Perry [his body-servant], and retain him until he or I can do better. You can do the same with Billy. The rest that are hired out had better be furnished with their papers and be let go. But what can be done with those at the W. H. and Romancoke? Those at and about Arlington can take care of themselves, I hope, and I have no doubt but all are gone who desire to do so. At any rate, I can do nothing for them now." [1]

In another letter, dated March 31, 1863, he writes further, showing his solicitude about his freed servants. One he wishes a place gotten for on a railway; two others, who had been hired out, he advises to remain where they are till the end of the year, when they are to have their earnings devoted to their own benefit. "But what can be done," he asks, "with poor little Jim? It would be cruel to turn him out on the world. He could not take care of himself." [2]

This is an epitome of the old Virginian's relation to his servants, and it will be observed that this representative of his class never speaks of them as his slaves, even in discussing intimately with his son their legal status.

His love of children and his companionship with

[1] Letter to General G. W. C. Lee, January 11, 1863.
[2] Jones' "Life and Letters of Robert E. Lee," pp. 286, 287.

them shine forth in his letters and mark the simplicity that is so often allied to true greatness. In one of his letters to his wife long before the war, when he was on duty in the West, he gives a glimpse of this tenderness toward children which ever distinguished him. He says of a ride he took: ". . . I saw a number of little girls, all dressed up in their white frocks and pantalets, their hair plaited and tied up with ribbons, running and chasing each other in all directions. I counted twenty-three nearly the same size. As I drew up my horse to admire the spectacle, a man appeared at the door with the twenty-fourth in his arms. 'My friend,' said I, 'are all these your children?'

"'Yes,' he said, 'and there are nine more in the house, and this is my youngest.'

"Upon further inquiry, however, I found that they were only temporarily his. He said, however, that he had been admiring them before I came up, and just wished that he had a million of dollars, and that they were all his in reality. I do not think the eldest exceeded seven or eight years old. It was the prettiest sight I have seen in the West, and, perhaps, in my life. . . ." This love of children ever distinguished him.

Such was the heart of this great captain, who, to some, seemed cold and aloof when, as Emerson says, genius was only protecting itself by solitude.

Writing from before Petersburg, years after, to his wife of three little girls, the children of an old neighbor in happier days at Arlington, who had paid him a visit in his camp, each with a basket in which they had brought him fresh eggs, pickles, and a pair of socks,

"I begged them," Lee said, "to bring me nothing but their kisses and to keep the eggs, corn, etc., for themselves."

Of Lee's tranquil mind, even amid the most difficult conditions, we have constant proof. No apparent disadvantage of position, no threats or impending dangers, appear to have disturbed that equanimity which so marks him as among the great.

While McClellan, accepting the wildest statements of "intelligent contrabands," was rating the force in his front at two and a half times its actual numbers and was throwing away precious weeks while he clamored for reinforcements, and while his successors often saw a vast army in their front whose shadows caused them much delay, Lee, from the first, even amid the deepest darkness of the situation, saw with a clearness which no gloom could obscure. Writing from his camp, during the Western Virginia campaign, he says: "The force of the enemy, estimated by prisoners captured, is put down at from 17,000 to 20,000. General Floyd thinks 18,000. I do not think it exceeds 9,000 or 10,000, but it exceeds ours." [1]

From camp near Orange Court House he writes on the eve of the battle of Second Manassas, under date of August 17, 1862: "General Pope says he is very strong and seems to feel so, for he is moving apparently up the Rapidan. I hope he will not prove stronger than we are. I learn since I have left that General McClellan has moved down the James River with his whole army,

[1] Letter to Mrs. Lee, October 7, 1861; letter to his son, Major W. H. F. Lee, October 12, 1861.

so we shall have busy times. Burnside and King, from Fredericksburg, have joined Pope, which, from their own report, has swelled Pope to 92,000. I do not believe it, though I believe he is very big."

"General Hooker," he wrote, "is agitating something on the other side, or, at all events, he is agitating his troops. . . . Yesterday he was marching his men up and down the river. . . ."

If Hooker prided himself on his fine army, Lee had no less confidence in his own, however outnumbered. "I agree with you," he wrote Hood, "in believing that our army would be invincible if properly organized and officered. There never were such men in an army before. They will go anywhere and do anything if properly led. But there is the difficulty—proper commanders. Where can they be obtained?" [1]

It has been customary to think of piety as the peculiar attribute of Jackson, the Puritan in type, rather than of Lee, the cavalier. But, if possible, Lee was even more pious than his great lieutenant. In fact, both were men who, in the early prime of their manhood, consecrated themselves to God, and thenceforth served Him with a single heart. It shines forth in every page they ever penned, in every act they ever performed. It was the basis of their character; it formed the foundation of that wonderful poise which, amid the most difficult and arduous situations, left them the supreme tranquillity which was the atmosphere in which their powers found vitality. No one can familiarize himself with Lee's life without seeing that he was a man con-

[1] Letter to General J. B. Hood, May 21, 1863.

secrated to the work of his divine Master, and amid all conditions possessing a mind stayed on Him.

Not Cromwell's army was more religious than that which followed Lee, and the great Protector was not so pious as the great captain who led the Army of Northern Virginia.

The principle on which he acted was stated in one of his letters. "We are all in the hands of a kind God," he wrote, "who will do for us what is best, and more than we deserve, and we have only to endeavor to deserve more and to do our duty to Him and to ourselves. May we all deserve His mercy, His care, and His protection." [1]

Such was the man to whom first Virginia, and later the entire South, confided the leadership of her soldiery, and on whom they laid the burden of their destiny.

His advice to his youngest son, whom he had advised on leaving college to enlist in a good company, was characteristic of him: "To be obedient to all authority, and to do his duty in everything, great or small." [2]

It was also characteristic alike of him and of the soldiery of the South that he should have refused to procure for this son a commission, as long afterward he promptly discountenanced the idea of promoting his eldest son (though a soldier so accomplished that he wished for him as his chief of staff) over the heads of officers who had served under him and proved their capacity under his eye.

"I do not think," says the former, in his interesting

[1] Letter of September 1, 1856; cited in Jones' "Lee," p. 81.
[2] "Recollections of General Lee," by Captain R. E. Lee.

"Recollections" of his father, "that it ever occurred to my father to have me, or rather get me, a position in the army. I know it never occurred to me, nor did I ever hear at that time, or afterward, from any one that I might have been entitled to better rank because of my father's prominence in Virginia and in the Confederacy." [1]

It was not until that son had fought as a private through the valley campaigns of Jackson, the battles around Richmond, the Maryland campaign, and had distinguished himself,[2] that he received the promotion to the staff of his brother, General William H. F. Lee.

Indeed, among the troubles with which Lee had to contend were the efforts made by politicians in the civil government to procure commissions and promotions for their constituents, and the delay experienced in getting his recommendations for promotion for merit acted on.

The fact constitutes one of the few complaints in his letters, and he set the example by steadfastly setting his face against any favoritism toward his own family. His two sons, who became generals, were both officers in the old army and were both in the retreat to Appomattox until one of them was captured, with five other general officers and some 6,000 men, at Sailor's Creek, in one of the last fights of the war. Of their character some idea may be formed from the fact that when one of them, General William H. F. Lee, was held as a hostage under sentence of death, the other, General

[1] "Recollections of General Lee," by R. E. Lee.
[2] Moore's "Recollections of a Cannoneer under Jackson."

G. W. C. Lee, wrote, asking to be accepted as a hostage in his stead, placing the offer on the ground that his brother had a wife and child, while he, his equal in rank and the eldest son, was unmarried.

Of his son's confinement under sentence as a hostage, which, the father says, was "grievous" to him, Lee writes to his other son. "I had seen in the papers the intention announced by the Federal Government of holding him as a hostage for the two captains selected to be shot. If it is right to shoot those men this should make no difference in their execution; but I have not thought it right to shoot them, and differ in my ideas from most of our people on the subject of reprisal. Sometimes I know it to be necessary, but it should not be resorted to at all times, and in our case policy dictates that it should be avoided whenever possible." [1]

Happy the people that can produce such a father and such sons!

It is told of Sidney, that, when wounded and perishing of thirst, some one brought him water, and he ordered it given to a dying soldier, whose need was greater than his. Lee's army was full of soldiers who would have done that which gave Sidney fame, and the same thing may be said of the better element of the Army of the Potomac. Such was the temper and character of the men who followed Lee, and such was the temper and character of their beloved commander, whom they loved to call in affectionate phrase, "Marse Robert." He was their idol and their ideal, and his impress was stamped on his army.

[1] Letter to General G. W. C. Lee, August 7, 1863.

The Master whom he so faithfully and humbly tried to serve, whose precepts were ever in his heart and whose spirit shone ever in his life, had laid down for him the law as had His forerunner and prophet: "And to the soldiers he said, Do violence to no man."

This high rule, like all others of his divine Master, Lee ever followed, and, so far as possible, inculcated on his army, by whom, to their eternal honor be it said, the noble example was nobly followed. Unhappily for the world, and for the future reputation of some who otherwise might as able soldiers have won the admiration of a whole people, rather than of a mere section of that people, though McClellan, McDowell, Burnside, and numberless gentlemen who followed them conducted war on high principles, it was not the invariable rule among all commanders.

Butler had damned himself to everlasting fame by orders and acts in Louisiana which no soldier can think of without a blush.[1] Hunter, in despite of expostulations, had burnt his way through the beautiful valley where Lee was to find his last resting place, and had left in his track the scarred and blackened ruins of countless dwellings. To the honor of the brave men he commanded it is said that he "had to deprive forty of his commissioned officers of their commands before he could carry into execution his infamous orders." [2] Even

[1] In his infamous "Order 28" he had ordered that any woman in New Orleans who should "by word, or gesture, or movement insult or show contempt for any officer or soldier of the United States, should be regarded and treated as a woman of the town plying her avocation."

[2] "Official Report of History Com., Grand Camp C. V.," in "The Confederate Cause," p. 103.

Halleck declared his action "barbarous." [1] It was reserved for Sherman, possibly the second greatest general on the Northern side, to reverse most completely the advances of civilization and hark back almost to the ferocious methods of mediævalism. To find the proof of this, one has no need to go outside of this officer's own recorded words.

"War is hell," he was quoted long after as saying. He did more than all others to make it so. He ruthlessly devastated, not only for the needs of his army and to deprive his enemy of subsistence, but to horrify and appall. He made war not only on men, but on women and children. He shelled defenceless towns which had not an armed man in them and had offered to surrender.

"In nearly all his despatches after he had reached the sea," says Rhodes, an historian from his State, who is his apologist and his admirer, "he gloated over the destruction of property." [2]

He gloated over the havoc he wrought, first, in anticipation, as he wrote, how he could "make a wreck of the country from Chattanooga to Atlanta, including the latter city," [3] and again, how he could "make Georgia howl"; [4] next, in the act of its perpetration, as he issued his orders for his army to "forage liberally on the country," and expressly forbade his officers to give receipts for property taken; authorized the wanton destruction of mills and houses; and while subordinate officers, like

[1] Sherman's "Memoirs," II, p. 129.
[2] Rhodes' "History of the United States," vol. V, p. 22.
[3] Official Records, vol. XXXIX, part 2, p. 202.
[4] *Ibid.*, part 3, p. 162.

Howard and Cox and Schofield, were writhing under the robberies of defenceless women, extending even to the tearing of rings from their fingers, he chuckled over the robberies committed by his men—who quoted his orders to his face—and reviewed his "bummers," an organized corps of robbers, who have never had their counterpart since the Free Companies passed from the stage under the awakening conscience of modern Europe.

If these are strong words they are largely taken from his own writings.

He sent an express message to the corps commander, General Davis, at General Howell Cobb's plantation, "to explain whose plantation it was and instruct him to spare nothing." [1] This was but warring on women, for General Howell Cobb was far away at his post of duty in command of his brigade in Virginia and his brother, General Thomas Cobb, was in his honored grave two years ere this, having fallen at the foot of Marye's Heights, as a brave man falls, holding back brave men. "I would not restrain the army," Sherman wrote coolly, "lest its vigor and energy should be impaired." [2]

Speaking of the burning of Columbia, which Sherman wrote his brother he had in his report "distinctly charged to General Wade Hamilton," he adds, "I confess I did so pointedly to shake the faith of his people in him." [3] A distinguished historian from his own State has declared of this destruction of Columbia,

[1] Sherman's "Memoirs," II, p. 185.
[2] *Ibid.*, II, p. 255.
[3] *Ibid.*, II, p. 287.

a defenceless city which had surrendered, that "it was the most monstrous barbarity of this barbarous march. Before his movements began, General Sherman had begged permission to turn his army loose in South Carolina and devastate it. He used this permission to the full. He protested that he did not wage war upon women and children. But under the operations of his orders the last morsel of food was taken from hundreds of destitute families that his soldiers might feast in needless and riotous abundance. Before his eyes rose, day after day, the mournful clouds of smoke on every side that told of old people and their grandchildren driven in mid-winter, from the only roofs that were to shelter them, by the flames which the wantonness of his soldiers had kindled. Yet, if a single soldier was punished for a single outrage or theft during that entire movement we have found no mention of it in all the voluminous records of the march." [1]

Place Lee's general order from Chambersburg on invading Pennsylvania beside Sherman's correspondence with Halleck, and let posterity judge thereby the character of the commanders. Halleck, chief of staff and military adviser to President Lincoln, writes to Sherman, "Should you capture Charleston, I hope that by some accident the place might be destroyed, and if a little salt should be sown upon its site it might prevent the growth of future crops of nullification and secession," and Sherman replies,[2] "I will bear in mind

[1] "Ohio in the War," by Hon. Whitelaw Reid.

[2] Despatch of December 24, 1864. Sherman's "Memoirs," II, pp. 223, 227, 228.

your hint as to Charleston, and do not think salt will be necessary. When I move on, the Fifteenth Corps will be on the right wing, and their position will bring them naturally into Charleston first, and if you have watched the history of that corps you have remarked that they generally do up their work pretty well."

While this general was giving orders to burn mills and destroy all food sources on which non-combatants depended for life, and to convey prisoners first, or if prisoners were wanting, then non-combatant inhabitants, over all bridges and other places suspected of being mined, and "could hardly help laughing at their stepping so gingerly along the road where it was supposed sunken torpedoes might explode at each step";[1] and while even Grant, not yet risen to his last splendid act of magnanimity, as he was brought to do in the long vigils before Petersburg, was expressing his hope to Hunter that his troops would "eat out Virginia clear and clean, as far as they could go, so that crows flying over it for the balance of the season would have to carry their provender with them";[2] Lee, as he marched into Pennsylvania, issued orders to his troops to remember that they made war only on armed men, and that no greater disgrace could befall the army, and through it the whole South, than the perpetration of barbarous outrages on the innocent and defenceless. This whole order can never be too frequently repeated. It gives the man as he was.

[1] Sherman's "Memoirs," II, p. 194.
[2] Official Records, vol. XXXVII, part 2, pp. 300, 301.

HDQRS. ARMY OF NORTHERN VA.,
CHAMBERSBURG, PA., *June* 27, 1863.

GENL. ORDER, No. 72.

The commanding general has observed with marked satisfaction the conduct of the troops on the march, and confidently anticipates results commensurate with the high spirit they have manifested. No troops could have displayed greater fortitude or better performed the arduous marches of the past ten days. Their conduct in other respects has, with few exceptions, been in keeping with their character as soldiers and entitles them to approbation and praise.

There have, however, been instances of forgetfulness on the part of some that they have in keeping the yet unsullied reputation of the army, and that the duties exacted of us by civilization and Christianity are not less obligatory in the country of the enemy than in our own. The commanding general considers that no greater disgrace would befall the army, and through it our whole people, than the perpetration of the barbarous outrages upon the innocent and defenceless, and the wanton destruction of private property, that have marked the course of the enemy in our own country. Such proceedings not only disgrace the perpetrators and all connected with them, but are subversive of the discipline and efficiency of the army and obstructive to the ends of our present movements. It must be remembered that we make war only on armed men, and that we cannot take vengeance for the wrong our people have suffered without lowering ourselves in the eyes of all whose abhorrence has been excited by the atrocities of our enemy, and offending against Him to whom vengeance belongeth, without whose favor and support our efforts must all prove in vain.

The commanding general, therefore, earnestly exhorts the troops to abstain with most scrupulous care from unnecessary or wanton injury to private property, and he enjoins upon all officers to arrest and bring to summary punishment all who shall in any way offend against the orders on this subject.

R. E. Lee, *General.*

Colonel Freemantle, of the British army, who was along with the army, says: "I saw no straggling into the houses; nor were any of the inhabitants disturbed or annoyed by the soldiers. I went into Chambersburg and witnessed the singular good behavior of the troops toward the citizens. To one who has seen the ravages of the Northern troops in Southern towns, this forbearance seems most commendable and surprising."

In this he is sustained by the testimony of a multitude of reliable witnesses.[1] It is an error to imagine that Lee was lax in the enforcement of his orders. It was only with those higher officers whom he could not replace that he overlooked failure to comply with his orders. An excellent illustration of this is the story of his having sent for a colonel of artillery whose command had rendered conspicuous service in a battle a few days before. It was supposed that the summons was for the purpose of complimenting the colonel. But on his arrival all he received was a reprimand from

[1] Colonel William Nelson, of the artillery, on the retreat from Gettysburg, witnessed a cow break out of her pasture and join the beef herd which was passing by. The farmer's wife was in much distress. Riding back, Colonel Nelson directed Captain Woolfork, who was near by, to order one of his lieutenants to take a squad of reliable men and cut the cow out of the herd and return her to her mistress.

the general for having allowed some of his men to ride on his guns, which was against orders. The colonel used to say that he thought of replying that if the general had seen his men in the battle next day he would have seen many of those same men lying under the guns. But he did not say it. Few men in the Army of Northern Virginia, whatever their devotion to "Marse Robert," ventured to reply to him. They stood mightily in awe of him.

His orders against depredation, even in the enemy's country, were rigidly enforced, and having seen a soldier running away from a farm yard with a stolen pig, he is said to have promptly ordered his execution. Whether this story be authentic or not, it is unquestioned that he was stern in enforcing discipline in this regard. The story is known how, on being told by a bare-headed prisoner in reply to the question, "Where is your hat?" that a soldier had taken it, he had a search made and the hat returned.

In his admirable "Review of the Gettysburg Campaign," Colonel David G. McIntosh, whose battalion was among the most noted for service on that fatal field, and who was in the fight from the first morning, relates that when on the retreat to the Potomac his command reached St. James's College, it was given the first opportunity to rest and cook rations which it had had since the struggle began on the first day. Having gone into camp in a grove, he was so worn out that he flung himself on the ground and was at once asleep. He was soon aroused by a message that General Lee wished to see him, and on making his way to where the general

was, he was received "with great austerity of manner" and suddenly "awoke to the fact that a long row of camp-fires were blazing brightly in full view, piled high with fence rails." Pointing to the fires, General Lee inquired if he had received "Order No. 72." He replied that he had, and that the order had been duly published. "Looking at me for a moment," continues Colonel McIntosh, "he said: 'Then, sir, you must not only have them published, but you must see that they are obeyed,' and with a bow and majestic wave of the hand, he turned and rode away, leaving me decidedly crestfallen."

Illustrations might be multiplied indefinitely to show that, while he fought with all his might, he fought only armed enemies, and, whatever the provocation, bore himself toward others with knightly consideration.

It is a record of general and of men of which the South may well boast and of which the whole nation will some day be proud.

## CHAPTER XXV

### LEE IN DEFEAT

And now, having endeavored to picture Lee during those glorious campaigns which must, to the future student of military skill, place him among the first captains of history, I shall not invite attention further to Lee the soldier—to Lee the strategist—to Lee the victorious, but to a greater Lee—to Lee the defeated.

As glorious as were these campaigns, it is on the last act of the drama—the retreat from Petersburg, the surrender at Appomattox, and the dark period that followed that surrender—that we must look to see him at his best. His every act, his every word, showed how completely he had surrendered himself to Duty, and with what implicit obedience he followed the command of that

"Stern daughter of the voice of God."

"Are you sanguine of the result of the war?" asked Bishop Wilmer of him in the closing days of the struggle. His reply was:

"At present I am not concerned with results. God's will ought to be our aim, and I am quite contented that His designs should be accomplished and not mine."

On that last morning when his handful of worn and starving veterans had made their last charge, to find themselves shut in by ranks of serried steel, hemmed

in by Grant's entire army, he faced the decree of Fate with as much constancy as though that decree were success, not doom.

"What will history say of the surrender of an army in the field?" asked an officer of his staff in passionate grief.

"Yes, I know they will say hard things of us; they will not understand that we were overwhelmed by numbers; but that is not the question, colonel. The question is, is it right to surrender this army? If it is right, then I will take all of the responsibility."

It was ever the note of duty that he sounded.

"You will take with you," he said to his army in his farewell address, "the satisfaction that proceeds from the consciousness of duty faithfully performed."

"We are conscious that we have humbly tried to do our duty," he said, a year or more after the war, when the clouds hung heavy over the South; "we may, therefore, with calm satisfaction trust in God and leave results to Him."

The sun which has shone in the morning, but has become obscured by clouds in the afternoon, sometimes breaks forth and at its setting shines with a greater splendor than it knew even at high noon.

So here. Sheathing his stainless sword, surrendering in the field the remnant of an army that had once been the most redoubtable body of fighting men of the century, the greatest captain, the noblest gentleman of our time, expecting to slip into the darkness of oblivion, suddenly stepped forth from the gloom of defeat into the splendor of perpetual fame.

I love to think of Grant as he appeared that April day at Appomattox: the simple soldier, the strenuous fighter who, though thrashed, was always ready to fight again; who, now though he had achieved the prize for which he had fought so hard and had paid so dearly, was so modest and so unassuming that but for his shoulder-straps and that yet better mark of rank, his generosity, he might not have been known as the victor. Southerners generally have long forgiven Grant all else for the magnanimity that he showed that day to Lee. By his orders no salutes of joy were fired, no public marks of exultation over his fallen foe were allowed. History contains no finer example of greatness. Not Alexander in his generous youth excelled him.

Yet, it is not more to the victor that Posterity will turn her gaze than to the vanquished, her admiration at the glory of the conqueror wellnigh lost in amazement at the dignity of the conquered.

Men who saw the defeated general when he came forth from the chamber where he had signed the articles of capitulation say that he paused a moment as his eyes rested once more on the Virginia hills, smote his hands together as though in some excess of inward agony, then mounted his gray horse, Traveller, and rode calmly away.

If that was the very Gethsemane of his trials, yet he must have had then one moment of supreme, if chastened, joy. As he rode quietly down the lane leading from the scene of capitulation, he passed into view of his men—of such as remained of them. The

news of the surrender had got abroad and they were waiting, grief-stricken and dejected, upon the hill-sides, when they caught sight of their old commander on the gray horse. Then occurred one of the most notable scenes in the history of war. In an instant they were about him, bare-headed, with tear-wet faces; thronging him, kissing his hand, his boots, his saddle; weeping; cheering him amid their tears; shouting his name to the very skies. He said: "Men, we have fought through the war together. I have done my best for you. My heart is too full to say more."

The cheers were heard afar off over the hills where the victorious army lay encamped, and awakened some anxiety. It was a sound they well knew:

> "The voice once heard through Shiloh's woods,
> And Chickamauga's solitudes,
> The fierce South cheering on her sons."

It was reported in some of the Northern papers that it was the sound of jubilation at the surrender. But it was not. It was the voice of jubilation, yet not for surrender: but for the captain who had surrendered their muskets but was still the commander of their hearts.

This is Lee's final victory and the highest tribute to the South: that the devotion of the South to him was greater in the hour of defeat than in that of victory. It is said that Napoleon was adored by the men of France, but hated by the women. It was not so with Lee. No victor ever came home to receive more signal evidences of devotion than this defeated general.

Richmond was in mourning. Since the Union army had entered her gates, every house had been closed as though it were the house of death. One afternoon, a few days after the surrender, Lee, on his gray horse, Traveller, attended by two or three officers, crossed the James and rode quietly up the street to his home on Franklin Street, where he dismounted. That evening it was noised abroad that General Lee had arrived; he had been seen to enter his house. Next morning the houses were open as usual; life began to flow in its accustomed channels. Those who were there have said that when General Lee returned they felt as safe as if he had had his whole army at his back.

His first recorded words on his arrival were a tribute to his successful opponent. "General Grant has acted with magnanimity," he said to some who spoke of the victor with bitterness. It was the key-note to his after-life.

Indeed, from this record a few facts stand forth beyond all others: Lee's nobility and genius; the fortitude of the Southern people; Grant's resolution and magnanimity, and the infinite valor of the American soldier.

Over forty years have gone by since that day in April when Lee, to avoid further useless sacrifice of life, surrendered himself and all that remained of the Army of Northern Virginia and gave his parole d'honneur to bear arms no more against the United States. To him, who with prescient mind had long borne in his bosom knowledge of the exhausted resources of the Confederacy, and had seen his redoubtable army, under the

"policy of attrition," dwindle away to a mere ghost of its former self, it might well appear that he had failed, and, if he ever thought of his personal reputation, that he had lost the soldier's dearest prize; that Fame had turned her back and Fate usurped her place. Thenceforth he who had been the leader of armies, whose glorious achievements had filled the world, who had been the prop of a high-hearted nation's hope, was to walk the narrow by-way of private life, defeated, impoverished, and possibly misunderstood.

But to us who have survived for the space of more than a generation, how different it appears. We know that time, the redresser of wrongs, is steadily righting the act of unkind Fate; and Fame, firmly established in her high seat, is ever placing a richer laurel on his brow.

Yea, ride away, thou defeated general! Ride through the broken fragments of thy shattered army, ride through thy war-wasted land, amid thy desolate and stricken people. But know that thou art riding on Fame's highest way:

> "This day shall see
> Thy head wear sunlight and thy feet touch stars."

## CHAPTER XXVI

### AFTER THE WAR

The sternest test of Lee's character was yet to come. Only those who went through it can know the depth of the humiliation in which, during the next few years, malignity, with ignorance for ally, strove to steep the South.

Out of it Lee came without a trace of rancor or of bitterness. In all the annals of our race no man has ever shown a nobler or more Christian spirit.

Lincoln, who was of Southern blood and whose passion was a reunited Union, was in his grave, slain by a madman, and after life's fitful fever was sleeping well, his last message being one of peace and good-will. His successor began by flinging himself into the arms of those who had hated Lincoln most.

On the 29th of May President Johnson issued a proclamation of amnesty, but General Lee, with all others of rank, was excluded from its operation, and he was indicted for treason by a grand jury, composed partly of negroes, especially selected for the purpose of returning indictments against him and Mr. Davis. There were those who stood proudly aloof and gave no sign of desiring reinstatement as citizens. Some scornfully declared their resolution to live and die without accepting parole. Not so the broad-minded and wise Lee. He immediately wrote (on June 13) to the Presi-

dent, applying for the "benefits and full restoration of all rights and privileges extended to those included in the terms of the proclamation." This application he enclosed on the same day in a letter to General Grant, informing him that he was ready to meet any charges that might be preferred against him and did not wish to avoid trial, but that he had supposed that the officers and men of the Army of Northern Virginia were by the terms of surrender protected by the United States Government from molestation so long as they conformed to its conditions.

Grant immediately rose to the demand of the occasion—as he had a way of doing in great emergencies. He informed General Lee that his understanding of the convention at Appomattox was identical with his; and he is said to have threatened Johnson with the surrender of the command of the army unless the indictment were quashed and the convention honorably observed.

The assassination of Lincoln had played perfectly into the hands of the radical element of his party, which had fought him with virulence, and now turned the outbreak of popular vengeance at the North to their own profit. They surpassed Johnson, and Johnson, finding himself confronted by an ever-strengthening phalanx of enemies within his own party, the same who had fought Lincoln so bitterly, enlarged by the new contingent of his personal foes, soon, for his own reasons, underwent a change of heart. From denouncing against the South measures that should "make treason odious," he began to speak of the South

to Southerners in a more conciliatory manner. Governor Letcher, of Virginia, who had been arrested, was treated in Washington with kindness and consideration. It was on learning of this that General Lee declared his opinion that the decision of war having been against the South, it was "the part of wisdom to acquiesce in the result, and of candor to recognize the fact." The interests of the State of Virginia, he said, were the same as those of the United States. Its prosperity would rise or fall with the welfare of the country. The duty of its citizens then appeared to him too plain to admit of doubt. He urged that all should unite in honest efforts to obliterate the effects of war and to restore the blessings of peace. That they should remain, if possible, in the country; promote harmony and good feeling; qualify themselves to vote and elect to the State and general legislatures wise and patriotic men who would devote their abilities to the interests of the country and the healing of all dissensions. "I have," he asserted, "invariably recommended this course since the cessation of hostilities, and have endeavored to practise it myself." [1]

From this time he gave all the weight of his great name to the complete re-establishment of the Union, and as his old soldiers followed and obeyed him on the field of battle, so now the whole South followed him in peace. Only the South knows as yet what the Union owes to Lee.

Happily, as we know, his serene soul, lifted too high to be disturbed by any storms of doubt, was untroubled

[1] Letter of August 28, 1865, to ex-Governor Letcher.

by any question born of his failure. "I did nothing more," he said to General Hampton, one of his most gallant lieutenants, "than my duty required of me. I could have taken no other course without dishonor, and if it were all to be done over again, I should act in precisely the same manner."

Thus, in the lofty calm of a mind conscious of having tried faithfully to follow ever the right, of having obeyed without question the command of duty, in simple reliance on the goodness of God, the great captain passed the brief evening of his life, trying, by his constant precept and example, to train the young men of the South as Christian gentlemen.

A story was told just after the war which illustrates the devotion of Lee's old soldiers to their defeated general.

Not long after the surrender, a soldier rang at General Lee's door and called for the general. "General," said he, as General Lee entered, "I'm one of your soldiers, and I've come here as the representative of four of my comrades who are too ragged and dirty to venture to see you. We are all Virginians, general, from Roanoke County, and they sent me here to see you on a little business. They've got our President in prison, and now—they—talk—about—arresting—*you*. And, general, we can't stand—we'll never stand and see that. Now, general, we five men have got about two hundred and fifty acres of land in Roanoke—very good land, too, it is, sir—and if you'll come up there and live, I've come to offer you our land, all of it, and we five men will work as your field hands, and you'll have very little

trouble in managing it with us to help you. And, general, there are near about a hundred of us left in old Roanoke, and they could never take you there, for we could hide you in the hollows of the mountains, and the last man of us would die in your defence."

With a great deal of delicacy he went on to suggest that the ladies of General Lee's family would lack society on a lonely mountain farm, but said that the Springs were hard by, and that out of the proceeds of the farm General Lee and his family could afford to spend all their summers there and thus find the society which these devoted field hands did not dare to offer.

General Lee was, of course, forced to decline; but he would not allow the brave fellow to depart until he was better clad than when he came in.[1]

He was much disturbed about this time by the tendency of some of his old friends in their despair to emigrate from the South. That constant soul knew no defeat, much less despair, and he had not despaired of the South. He protested against leaving the State for any reason, avowing his unalterable belief in the duty of every man to remain and bear his part in whatever trials might befall. "The thought of abandoning the country and all that must be left in it," he wrote, "is abhorrent to my feelings, and I prefer to struggle for its restoration and share its fate rather than to give up all as lost, and Virginia has need for all her sons." [2] And this devotion he exemplified to the fullest extent in his life.

[1] George W. Bagby's "Old Virginia Gentleman," p. 62.
[2] Letter to Commodore M. F. Maury, September 8, 1865.

The war had scarcely ceased and his condition of narrow circumstances become known, when offers of places of honor and profit began to come to him: offers of the presidency of insurance companies and of other industrial enterprises—proposals that he should allow his name to be used for the highest office in the gift of the State; even offers from admirers in the old country of an asylum on that side of the water, where a handsome estate was tendered him, as a tribute of admiration, so that he could spend the residue of his life in peace and comfort.

His reply to all these allurements was that which we now know was the only one he could make: a gracious but irrevocable refusal. During the war, when a friend had suggested to him the probability that the people of the South would demand that he should be their president, he had promptly and decisively declared that he would never accept such a position. So now, when the governorship of Virginia was proposed to him, he firmly refused to consider it. With the same firmness he rejected all proposals to provide him with honorable commercial positions at a high salary.

On one of these occasions he was approached with a tender of the presidency of an insurance company at a salary of $50,000 a year. He declined it on the ground that it was work with which he was not familiar. "But, general," said the gentleman who represented the insurance company, "you will not be expected to do any work; what we wish is the use of your name."

"Do you not think," said General Lee, "that if my name is worth $50,000 a year, I ought to be very careful about taking care of it?"

Amid the commercialism of the present age this sounds as refreshing as the oath of a knight of the Round Table.

Defeated in one warfare, he was still a captain militant in the service of Duty: Duty that, like the moon, often shows her darkened face to her votary, though in the future she may beam with radiance.

Duty now appeared to him to send her summons from a little mountain town in which was a classical school which Washington had endowed, and Lee, turning from all offers of wealth and ease, obeyed her call.

"They are offering my father everything," said one of his daughters, "but the only thing he will accept: a place to earn honest bread while engaged in some useful work." That speech, made to a trustee of the institution referred to, brought Lee the offer of the presidency of Washington College at a salary of $1,500 a year; and after some hesitation, due to his fear that his association with an institution might in the state of political feeling then existing prove an injury rather than a benefit to it, he accepted it. So poor were the people that Judge Brockenborough, the trustee who bore the invitation, had to borrow a suit of clothes from a friend to make himself presentable.

Thus, the first captain of his time, and almost, if not quite, the most famous man in the world, with offers that might well, in that hour of trial, have allured even him with all his modesty, turned his back on the

world, and following the lamp with which Duty appeared to light his way, rode quietly to that little mountain town in Rockbridge County to devote the remainder of his life to fitting the sons of his old soldiers to meet the exactions of the coming time. On his old war horse he rode into Lexington alone, one afternoon in the early autumn, and, after a hush of reverent silence at his first appearance, was greeted on the streets by his old soldiers with the far-famed rebel yell which he had heard last as he rode down the lane from Appomattox.

Ah! ride on alone, old man, with Duty at thy bridle-bit: behind thee is the glory of thy military career; before thee is the transcendent fame of thy future. Thou shalt abide there henceforth; there shall thy ashes repose; but thou shalt make of that little town a shrine to which pilgrims shall turn with softened eyes so long as men admire virtue and the heart aspires to the ideal of Duty.

He was sworn in as president on the 2d of October, 1865, in the presence of a few professors and friends, and thenceforth his life was devoted to the new service he had entered on with the same zeal with which he always applied himself to the duty before him.

In the winter of 1865–6, when the radical element that had secured control of the government at Washington were reaching out in every direction to try to find some evidence that would implicate Mr. Davis and General Lee in the conspiracy to murder Mr. Lincoln, General Lee was, with many others, summoned to Washington to appear before the committee of the

Congress having the investigation in charge. His examination covered a wide range and throws so much light, not only on his character, but on the situation at that time, that it justifies giving a summary of the whole and its most important parts in full.[1] His answers are a complete refutation of the idea held—possibly even now—by many, that the reconstruction measures adopted by the radical wing of the party whom Lincoln's death had brought in power had some justification. It had not a shred.

In reply to direct questions by his inquisitors as to what was the state of feeling toward the government of the United States of the "secessionists" in Virginia, he stated that he had been "living very retired" in Lexington for the last five months and had "had but little communication with politicians"; that he knew nothing save from his own observation, and such facts as had come to his knowledge; that he did not know of a single person who either felt or contemplated any resistance or opposition to the government of the United States; that he believed that the people of the South entirely acquiesced in the government of the United States, and were for co-operating with President Johnson in his policy of reconstruction, in the wisdom of which they had great confidence, and to which they looked forward as a hope of restoration. He believed that they expected to pay their share of the taxes levied by the government, including the war debt, and had never heard of any opposition to such payment, or of their making any distinction between

[1] Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, 39th Cong., p. 133.

that and other just debts. Indeed, he believed, from his knowledge of the people of Virginia, that they would be willing to pay the Confederate debt also, though he thought the people generally looked upon it as lost entirely.

This was far from what his inquisitors wished to hear, and they pressed him along other lines, among them as to the feeling of the "secessionists" in Virginia toward the freedmen, whom they were supposed to be oppressing. In reply, he declared, what every one now knows to have been the fact, that every one with whom he associated expressed the kindest feelings toward the freedmen, and wished to see them get on in the world, and particularly to take up some occupation for a living and to turn their hands to some work, and that efforts were being made among the farmers near his home to induce them to engage for the year at regular and fair living wages. He did not know, he stated, of any combination to keep down wages or establish any rate which the people did not think fair.

He further stated that where he had been the people were not only willing that the blacks should be educated, but were of the opinion that this would be for the advantage of both the blacks and the whites. He personally did not think that the black man was as capable of acquiring knowledge as the white man, though some were more apt than others, and he had known some to acquire knowledge in their trade or profession, and had had certain ones of his own who had learned to read and write very well.

He had heard of no combination having in view the

disturbance of the peace or any improper or unlawful acts, and had seen no evidence of it. On the contrary, wherever he had been they were "quiet and orderly, not disposed to work, or, rather, not disposed to any continuous engagement to work, but just very short jobs to provide them with the immediate means of subsistence," as they tended to "look rather to the present time than to the future."

In response to further questions, he stated that he did not believe in an amendment to the Constitution extending the suffrage to the colored people, as it "would open the door to a good deal of demagogism and lead to embarrassments in various ways. What the future may prove," he added, "how intelligent they may become, with what eyes they may look upon the interests of the State in which they may reside, I cannot say more than you can."

When further pressed on the subject, in reply to direct questions, he expressed as his opinion that it would be for the benefit of Virginia, both then and in the future, if she were relieved of the burden of her colored population by their moving to the Cotton States. "That is no new opinion with me," he added. "I have always thought so, and have always been in favor of emancipation—gradual emancipation."

In reply to the question whether "in the event of a war between the United States and any foreign power, such as England or France, if there should be held out to the secession portion of the people of Virginia or the other recently 'rebel' States a fair prospect of gaining their independence and shaking off the government of

the United States," it was or was not his opinion that they would "avail themselves of that opportunity," he declared that he could not speak with any certainty on that point; that he did not know how far they might be actuated by their feelings, and had nothing whatever to base his opinion on; but that, so far as he knew, they contemplated nothing of the kind at that time; and that, so far from having heard in his intercourse expressions of a hope that such a war might break out, he had heard those with whom he associated express the hope that the country might not be led into a war.

Having been pressed at this point by the question, what, in such an event, would be his own choice, he settled the matter by saying quietly, "I have no disposition now to do it, and I never have had."

On the point whether, during the Civil War, it was not contemplated by the government of the Confederacy to form an alliance with some foreign nation, if possible, he stated his belief that it had been their wish to do so if they could, as it had been their wish to have the Confederate Government recognized as an independent government, but that he knew nothing of the policy of the government, and "had no hand or part in it."

Touching the question as to the bearing of the people in the South toward the people of the North, he stated as his opinion that they accepted frankly the results of the war; that they were endeavoring to work and improve their conditions; and that their relation to Northerners who went down there would depend

upon the personal attitude of the latter and their manner of conducting themselves; that they felt that the North could afford to be generous, and their generosity and liberality toward the entire South would be the surest and the speediest means of regaining their good opinion.

The questions then turned upon the political views of the Southern people, and he was asked whether, if the Southern States were again given the opportunity of seceding, as they had been given under Mr. Buchanan, they would, in his opinion, avail themselves of that opportunity. He thought that this would depend upon the circumstances existing at the time, and that they might do so if they thought that it was to their interest; but he did not know of any deep-seated dislike or discontent against the government of the United States among the "secessionists" generally. He believed that they would perform all the duties that they were required to perform, and that the policy of President Johnson would naturally result in restoring the "old feeling," and in improving the material interests of the country.

Possibly with a view to entangle him the question was put to him whether "it would be practicable to convict a man in Virginia of treason for having taken part in this rebellion against the government, by a Virginia jury, without picking it with direct reference to a verdict of guilty." To this he replied: "On that point I have no knowledge, and I do not know what they would consider treason against the United States, if you refer to past acts."

He was then asked a more direct question, which, indeed, discovered the object of the entire inquisition: "Suppose a jury was empanelled in your own neighborhood, taken by lot, would it be possible to convict, for instance, Jeff Davis for having levied war upon the United States, and thus having committed the crime of treason?" His reply was: "I think it is very probable that they would not consider he had committed treason."

This was interesting, and the examination was pressed as follows: *Q.* Suppose the jury should be clearly and plainly instructed by the court that such an act of war upon the part of Mr. Davis, or any other leading man, constituted in itself the crime of treason under the Constitution of the United States, would the jury be likely to heed that instruction, and, if the facts were plainly before them, commit the offender? *A.* I do not know, sir, what they would do on that question.

*Q.* They do not generally suppose that it was treason against the United States, do they? *A.* I do not think that they so consider it.

*Q.* In what light would they view it? What would be the excuse or justification? How would they escape in their own mind? I refer to the past. I am referring to the past and the feelings they would have. *A.* So far as I know, they look upon the action of the State in withdrawing itself from the government of the United States as carrying the individuals of the State along with it; that the State was responsible for the act, not the individuals, and that the ordinance of secession, so called, or those acts of the State which

recognized a condition of war between the State and the general government, stood as their justification for their bearing arms against the government of the United States. Yes, sir, I think they would consider the act of the State as legitimate; that they were merely using the reserved rights, which they had a right to do.

*Q.* State, if you please—and if you are disinclined to answer the question you need not do so—what your own personal views on that question are. *A.* That was my view, that the act of Virginia, in withdrawing herself from the United States, carried me along as a citizen of Virginia, and that her laws and her acts were binding on me.

*Q.* All that you felt to be your justification in taking the course you did?

*A.* Yes, sir.

In this he had set forth the whole principle on which the South stood. He repudiated the idea that he had ever stated that he had been "wheedled or cheated" into his course by politicians. "I may have said," he explained, "and may have believed, that the positions of the two sections which they held to each other was brought about by the politicians of the country; that the great masses of the people, if they understood the real questions, would have avoided it; but not that I had been individually wheedled by the politicians. . . . I may have said that, but I do not recollect it; but I did believe at the time that it was an unnecessary condition of affairs and might have been avoided if forbearance and wisdom had been practised on both sides."

Having failed to entangle him in admissions of treason, one more ground for hope still remained. The inquisitors hoped to connect him and Mr. Davis with the cruelties charged to have been practised in Southern prisons. Accordingly, he was examined as to what knowledge he had of the cruelties practised toward the Union prisoners at Libby Prison and on Belle Isle. His answer was complete: "I never knew that any cruelty was practised, and I have no reason to believe that it was practised. I can believe, and have reason to believe, that privations may have been experienced by the prisoners, because I know that provisions and shelter could not be provided for them."

*Q.* Were you not aware that the prisoners were dying from cold and starvation?

*A.* I was not.

"I desire that you will speak your mind fully and freely on this subject," said his questioner (Mr. Howard), "for it is useless to conceal from you the fact that there seems to have been created a sad feeling in the hearts of the people at the North." To this Lee replied: "As regards myself, I never had any control over the prisoners, except those that were captured on the field of battle, when it was then my business to send them to Richmond, to the proper officer, who was then the provost-marshal-general. In regard to their disposition afterward I had no control. I never gave any order about it. It was entirely in the hands of the War Department."

*Q.* And not in your hands? *A.* And not in mine.

*Q.* Did these scenes come to your knowledge at all?

*A.* Never. No report was ever made to me about them. There was no call for any to be made to me. I did hear—it was mere hearsay—that statements had been made to the War Department, and that everything had been done to relieve them that could be done, even finally so far as to offer to send them to some other points—Charleston was one point named—if they would be received by the United States authorities and taken to their homes; but whether this is true or not I do not know. It was merely a report that I heard.

*Q.* Were you in the same ignorance of the scenes at Andersonville and Salisbury? *A.* I never knew the commandant at Andersonville until I saw by the papers, after the cessation of hostilities, that Captain Wirz had been arrested on that account, nor do I know now who commanded at Salisbury.

*Q.* And of course you know nothing of the scenes of cruelty about which complaints have been made at those places? *A.* Nothing in the world, as I said before. I suppose they suffered from the want of ability on the part of the Confederate States to supply their wants. At the very beginning of the war I knew that there was suffering of prisoners on both sides, but as far as I could I did everything in my power to relieve them and to establish the cartel which was established.

*Q.* (By Mr. Blow.) It has been frequently asserted that the Confederate soldiers feel more kindly toward the government of the United States than other persons or other people of the South. What are your observations on that point? *A.* From the Confederate sol-

diers I have heard no expression of any other opinion. They looked upon the war as a necessary evil and went through it. I have seen them relieve the wants of Federal soldiers on the field. The orders always were that the whole field should be treated alike. Parties were sent out to take the Federal wounded as well as the Confederate, and the surgeons were told to treat the one as they did the other. These orders given by me were respected on every field.

Thus, we have the highest authority—Lee's own word—that a wounded foe was treated by him as a friend.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### LEE AS COLLEGE PRESIDENT

No part of his life reflects greater honor on his memory than that which was now to come. Here, as in everything else, he addressed all his powers to the work in hand. He found the institution merely an old, denominational college, dilapidated and wellnigh ruined, without means and without students. The mere fact of his connection with it gave it at once a reputation. He changed the little college, as if by an enchanter's wand, from a mere academy, with but forty students and less than a half dozen professors, to a great institution of learning.[1] He instituted or extended the honor system—that Southern system which reckons the establishment of character informed with culture to be at once the basis and end of all education. Students flocked there from all over the South. He knew them all, and, what is more, followed them all in their work. He was as prompt at chapel as the chaplains; as interested in the classes as the professors and certainly more than the students. The standard he ever held up was that of duty.

One of his pleasures was the planting of trees, and the beautiful trees about the institution to-day are a part of the legacy he left.

His old soldiers, often at great sacrifice, sent their

[1] Address on Lee as a college president, by Dr. Edward S. Joynes.

sons to be under his direction, and to learn at his feet the stern lesson of duty. But it was he who made the college worthy of their confidence. He elevated the standards, broadened the scope, called about him the most accomplished professors to be found and inspired them with new enthusiasm. No principle was too abstruse for him to grasp, no detail too small for him to examine. He familiarized himself alike with the methods employed at the best institutions, and with the conduct and standing of every student at his own.

An educational official has stated that of a number of college presidents to whom he addressed an inquiry relating to educational matters, General Lee was the only one who took the trouble to send him an answer. He who had commanded armies, "the lowliest duties on himself did lay." He audited every account; he presided at every faculty meeting; studied and signed every report.

In fact, the chief stimulus to the students was the knowledge that General Lee was familiar with every student's standing, and, to some extent, with every man's conduct. An invitation to visit him in his office was the most dreaded event in a student's life, though the actual interview was always softened by a noble courtesy on the president's part into an experience which left an impress throughout life and ever remained a cherished memory.

To one thus summoned, the general urged greater attention to study, on the ground that it would prevent the failure which would otherwise inevitably come to him.

"But, general, you failed," said the youth, meaning, as he explained afterward, to pay him a tribute.

"I hope that you may be more fortunate than I," replied the general quietly.

On another occasion, a youth from the far South having "cut lectures" to go skating, an accomplishment he had just acquired, was summoned to appear before the president, and, having made his defence, was told by the general that he should not have broken the rule of the institution, but should have requested to be excused from attendance on lectures.

"You understand now?"

"Yes, sir. Well, general, the ice is fine this morning. I'd like to be excused to-day," promptly replied the ready youngster.

It was occasionally the habit of the young orators who spoke in public at celebrations to express their feelings by indulging in compliments to General Lee and the ladies, and the reverse of compliments to "the Yankees." Such references, clad in the glowing rhetoric and informed with the deep feeling of youthful oratory, never failed to stir their audiences and evoke unstinted applause. General Lee, however, notified the speakers that such references were to be omitted. He said: "You young men speak too long, and you make three other mistakes: what you say about me is distasteful to me; what you say about the North tends to promote ill feeling and injure the institution, and your compliments to the ladies are much more valued when paid in private than in public."

Among the students at this time were quite a num-

ber who had been soldiers and were habituated to a degree of freedom. Pranks among the students were, of course, common, and were not dealt with harshly. But he let them know that he was the president. When the Freedmen's Bureau agent was hooted by a number of persons, two students who were in the party were "sent home," a phrase which General Lee preferred to "dismissal." One episode occurred which showed the strong hand in the soft gauntlet.

Prior to General Lee's installation as president, it had always been the custom to grant at least a week's holiday at Christmas. This custom the faculty, under the president's lead, did away with, and thenceforth only Christmas Day was given as a holiday.

A petition to return to the old order having failed, a meeting of the students was held and a paper was posted, containing many signatures, declaring the signers' determination not to attend lectures during Christmas week. Some manifestation appeared on the part of certain of the faculty of giving in to the students' demand. General Lee settled the matter at once by announcing that any man whose name appeared on the rebellious declaration would be expelled from the college. And if every student signed it, he said, he would send every one home and simply lock up the college and put the key in his pocket.

The activity displayed in getting names off the paper was amusing, and the attendance at lectures that Christmas was unusually large.

Many stories have been told of his method of administering a rebuke where he thought it needed.

One was related by a gallant engineer officer to whose attention, when before Petersburg, the general had called some defect in the defences which were under his charge. The officer assured him that the matter should be attended to at once, and accordingly gave orders that it should be done. A day or two later the general met him and asked if the work had been done, and he in good faith said it had, on which the general said he would go and inspect it and invited him to attend him. To his dismay, on arrival at the spot, the work had not been done at all, and he found himself in the embarrassing position of having to explain that he had given orders to have it done. The general said nothing further, but soon after remarked on the mettlesomeness of the fine horse which the officer was riding, and the officer, glad to get off the subject of the neglected defences, explained that it was his wife's riding horse, but had proved so wild that he had taken it to get it suited to her hand. As they parted the general said quietly: "Captain, I think it might prove a good way to train that horse to ride him a little more over that rough ground along the trenches."

I cannot forbear to relate a personal incident which I feel illustrates well General Lee's method of dealing with his students. I was so unfortunate while at college as to have always an early class, and from time to time on winter mornings it was my habit "to run late," as the phrase went. This brought me in danger of meeting the president on his way from chapel, a contingency I was usually careful to guard against. One morning, however, I miscalculated, and as I turned

a corner came face to face with him. His greeting was most civil, and touching my cap I hurried by. Next moment I heard my name spoken, and turning I removed my cap and faced him.

"Yes, sir."

"Tell Miss ——" (mentioning the daughter of my uncle, General Pendleton, who kept house for him) "that I say will she please have breakfast a little earlier for you."

"Yes, sir." And I hurried on once more, resolved that should I ever be late again I would, at least, take care not to meet the general.

Craving due allowance alike for the immaturity of a boy and the mellowing influence of passing years, I will try to picture General Lee as I recall him, and as he must be recalled by thousands who yet remember him. He was, in common phrase, one of the handsomest men I ever knew and easily the most impressive-looking. His figure, which in earlier life had been tall and admirably proportioned, was now compact and rounded rather than stout, and was still in fine proportion to his height. His head, well set on his shoulders, and his erect and dignified carriage made him a distinguished and, indeed, a noble figure. His soft hair and carefully trimmed beard, silvery white, with his florid complexion and dark eyes, clear and frank, gave him a pleasant and kindly expression, and I remember how, when he smiled, his eyes twinkled and his teeth shone. He always walked slowly, and even pensively, for he was already sensible of the trouble which finally struck him down; and the impression that remains

with me chiefly is of his dignity and his gracious courtesy. I do not remember that we feared him at all, or even stood in awe of him. Collegians stand in awe of few things or persons. But we honored him beyond measure, and after nearly forty years he is still the most imposing figure I ever saw. Efforts were made time and time again to induce him to accept a position at the head of some establishment or enterprise, the emoluments of which would enable him to live in ease for the rest of his life; but all such invitations he promptly declined. To one of these invitations urging him to accept a position "at the head of a large house to represent Southern commerce, . . . reside in New York, and have placed at his disposal an immense sum of money," he replied: "I am grateful, but I have a self-imposed task which I must accomplish. I have led the young men of the South in battle; I have seen many of them die on the field; I shall devote my remaining energies to training young men to do their duty in life." [1]

Even here, in his seclusion, while honored by the best of those who had bravely fought against him, he was pursued by the malignity of those haters of the South who, having kept carefully concealed while the guns were firing, now that all personal danger was over, endeavored to make amends by assailing with their clamor the noblest of the defeated. It was a period of passion, and those who, under other conditions, might have acted with deliberation and reason, gave the loose to their feeling and surrendered themselves

[1] R. E. Lee's "Recollections of General Lee," p. 376.

blindly to the direction of their wildest and most passionate leaders. Those against whose private life the purity of his life was an ever-burning protest reviled him most bitterly. The hostile press of the time was filled with railing against him; the halls of Congress rang with denunciation of him as a traitor—the foolish and futile yelping of the cowardly pack that ever gather about the wounded and spent lion. And with what noble dignity and self-command he treated it all! To the nobility of a gentleman he added the meekness of a Christian. When, with a view to setting an example to the South, he applied to be included in the terms of the general amnesty finally offered, his application was ignored, and to his death he remained "a prisoner on parole."

He was dragged before high commissions and was cross-examined by hostile prosecutors panting to drive or inveigle him into some admission which would compromise him, but without avail, or even the ignoble satisfaction to his enemies that they had ruffled his unbroken calm.

"Seest thou not how they revile thee?" said a youth to Diogenes. "Yea; but seest thou not how I am not reviled?" said the philosopher.

He read little on the war, though he at one time contemplated writing a history of the campaigns of the Army of Northern Virginia in which he had been engaged, and he began, indeed, to collect the materials for the work. He wrote letters to some of his friends, and issued a circular to his old officers asking their cooperation. "I am desirous," he wrote to his former

adjutant-general, Colonel W. R. Taylor, "that the bravery and devotion of the Army of Northern Virginia shall be correctly transmitted to posterity. This is the only tribute that can now be paid to the worth of its noble officers and soldiers."

When he applied to the War Department in Washington for permission to copy papers and documents in the department, the request was refused, and the labor of collecting the materials from other sources was so great that, taken in connection with his other duties, he put aside the work and contented himself with writing a brief memoir of his honored father to accompany a new and revised edition which he edited of the latter's "Memoirs of the War in the Southern Department of the United States." Long states that "he relinquished the work with less reluctance because he felt that its truths and indispensable facts must expose certain persons to severe censure." [1]

That he did not, however, abandon the idea is apparent from a letter which he wrote to a kinsman of his in the early summer of 1870, but a few months before his death.

LEXINGTON, VA., 6*th June*, 1870.

MY DEAR CASSIUS: I am very much obliged to you for your letter of the 1st, and the interest you evince in the character of the people of the South, and their defence of the rights which they believed were guaranteed by the Constitution. The reputation of individuals is of minor importance to the opinion which

[1] Long's "Memoirs of Robert E. Lee," p. 422.

posterity may form of the motives which governed the South in their late struggle for the maintenance of the principles of the Constitution. I hope, therefore, a true history will be written and justice be done them. A history of the military events of the period would also be desirable. I have had it in view to write one of the campaigns in Virginia in which I was more particularly engaged. I have already collected some materials for the work, but lack so much that I wish to obtain that I have not commenced the narrative. I am very much obliged to you for the offer of the materials which you have collected. I think it probable that I have all the official reports, and I would not like to resort to any other source for a statement of facts. . . .

I am, very truly, your cousin,

R. E. Lee.

C. F. Lee, Jr., *Alexandria, Va.*

It was his diversion to ride his old war horse, Traveller, among the green hills of that beautiful country about Lexington, at times piloting through the bridle paths the little daughters of some professor, sun-bonneted and rosy, riding two astride the same horse; or now and then meeting an old soldier who asked the privilege of giving for him once more the old cheer, which in past days had at sight of him rung out on so many a hard-fought field.

In a horseback ride to the peaks of Otter, in the summer of 1867, he was accompanied by one of his daughters, who related afterward this pleasant incident of the trip. Having crossed the James at a ferry, where the ferryman, an old soldier, refused to accept

any payment from his old general, they were riding up a steep hill when they came on a group of little children playing in the road, with hands and faces both much besmeared with dirt. The general, as they passed, rallied them on their muddy faces, and they suddenly dashed away and scampered off up the hill. A few minutes later, as the general and his daughter rounded the hill, from a little cabin on the roadside rushed the same children, with their faces washed, their hair brushed, and the girls with clean aprons, and as they passed one of them called out: "We know you are General Lee. We have got your picture."[1] It was the epitome of the South: his picture and his influence are in every Southern heart.

His love for children, which, as mentioned before, had always been a noted trait of his character, still marked his life, and many stories are told of its manifestation, as well as of their love for him. On one occasion, having learned during a visit to a friend (Colonel Preston) that two little boys in the family were sick with croup, he trudged back next day in the midst of a storm with a basket of pecans and a toy for his two little friends.

As he rode in the afternoons on Traveller, he was often greeted by the children, to whom at times he extended an invitation to come and ride with him, and this invitation came to be a coveted honor. On another occasion as he was riding he came on two little daughters of ex-Governor Letcher, the elder of whom was vainly trying to get her six-year-old sister to re-

[1] R. E. Lee's "Recollections of General R. E. Lee," p. 271.

turn home. As General Lee rode up, she accosted him: "General Lee, won't you please make this child go home to her mother?" The general stopped and invited the little rebel to ride home with him, which she graciously consented to do, and was thereupon lifted up in front of him, and "was thus grandly escorted home." When the mother asked the other child why she had given General Lee so much trouble, she said: "I couldn't make Fan go home, and I thought he could do anything."

Another pretty story was of a little boy (the son of the Rev. Dr. J. William Jones, one of General Lee's earliest biographers) who, during a college commencement, slipped from his mother's lap, and going upon the platform where the general sat, seated himself at his feet, and snuggling against his knees, fell fast asleep, the general sitting motionless all the while, so as not to disturb the child.[1]

One of his biographers[2] relates that seeing him one day talking at his gate with a stranger to whom, as he ended, he gave some money, he inquired who the stranger was. "One of our old soldiers," said the general. "To whose command did he belong?" "Oh, he was one of those who fought against us," said General Lee. "But we are all one now, and must make no difference in our treatment of them." Indeed, that Lee had never any bitterness is evidenced by an incident which General Long mentions. During the campaign of strategy which followed Gettysburg, when Lee

[1] R. E. Lee's "Recollections of General Lee," pp. 266, 267, 325.
[2] Rev. Dr. J. William Jones.

manœuvred Meade back from the Rapidan, as his army passed through Culpeper, from which Meade had retired, a lady of the place who had been "somewhat scandalized by the friendly relations between some of her neighbors and the Yankees, took occasion to complain to the general that certain young ladies, then present, had been in the habit of visiting General Sedgwick at his head-quarters, which was pitched in the ample grounds of a citizen whose house he had declined to use. The young ladies were troubled, for the general looked very grave; but they were soon relieved, for he said: "I know General Sedgwick very well. It is just like him to be so kindly and considerate, and to have his band there to entertain them. So, young ladies, if the music is good, go and hear it as often as you can, and enjoy yourselves. You will find that General Sedgwick will have none but agreeable gentlemen about him."

Thus, in simple duties and simple pleasures, untouched by the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, he passed life's close among his own people, a hallowed memory forever to those who knew him, an example to all who lived in that dark time or shall live hereafter; the pattern of a Christian gentleman, who did justice, loved mercy, and walked humbly with his God.

The board of trustees wished to give him as a home the house erected for him as president. He superintended the erection of the house—which he always was careful to speak of as "the president's house," and never as "my house"—but declined to accept the gift of it for himself or family. He wrote to the board of trus-

tees: "Though fully sensible of the kindness of the board, and justly appreciating the manner in which they sought to administer to my relief, I am unwilling that my family should become a tax to the college; but desire all its funds should be devoted to the purposes of education. I know that my wishes on this subject are equally shared by my wife."

Knowing that Lee and his family had lost everything by the war, and were without means, efforts were made by friends and admirers to add to his comfort by increasing his salary; but, while assuring them of his appreciation of their kindness, he firmly declined to accept anything beyond his salary, either for himself or his family. General Ewell made a donation of $500 to the board of trustees of the college, with the stipulation that it should be used to increase General Lee's salary. Lee refused to accept it, and in a clear and forcible statement showed the needs of the college. Somewhat later, when his declining health had begun to cause his family and friends anxiety, he was induced to take a trip to the South, and while he was absent the board of trustees of the college voted an annuity of $3,000 to his family. This also, however, General Lee declined, though he must have known, as every one else knew, that his connection with the institution was worth many thousands of dollars a year to it. In fact, he was above not only all sordid but all material motives. In peace as in war his high soul by a natural law reached the highest elevation to which human nature may attain.

The following facts appear pertinent as illustrative of Lee's character. His abstemiousness was well

known to his army, and, like his piety, was held as an example which all admired even though they might not always emulate it. His wife stated that on his return home from the Mexican campaign he brought back unopened a bottle of brandy which she had sent along in case of sickness.

On one occasion he illustrated his ideas on this subject in the quiet way that he had, when, before Petersburg, he one evening walked in on a number of young officers of his staff who were discussing earnestly a mathematical problem, with a stone jug and two tin cups on the table beside them. He made no comment at the time, but next morning when one of the young officers mentioned the fact that he had had a strange dream the night before, the general observed that "when young gentlemen discuss at midnight mathematical problems, the unknown quantities in which are a stone jug and tin cups, they may expect to have strange dreams."

After the war, when a friend commented on his abstemiousness, he said that on taking command he knew he should inevitably make many mistakes, and he determined that at least it should not be charged to intemperance.

Lee's personal piety shines so through every letter he ever wrote that it would appear almost superfluous to mention it; yet it is quite certain that it was one of the mainsprings not only of his daily life, but of his genius. That serene mental composure in which he worked out his most difficult problems sprang from his abiding confidence in the divine wisdom and trust in the

divine goodness. Not a chaplain in his army excelled him in personal piety or in devoutness. The result was a spiritual gain to his army which has never been sufficiently considered in the reckoning of its forces. Time and again during the war a wave of spiritual awakening swept over the army whose head was the most pious and devout Christian that any army ever followed.

No misfortune ever dimmed for him this light, and the darkest cloud only served to increase his faith. After the war universal and ever-increasing gloom rolled over the South, not from the defeat of her armies, but from the profound humiliation in which the defeat enabled her political enemies to steep her. Yet even amid this, Lee's constant mind, stayed on God, suffered no arrows, not the most poisoned, to pierce him.

As illustrating his serene piety, we may take this from one of many similar letters to his children:

". . . And though the future is still dark and the prospects gloomy, I am confident that if we all unite in doing our duty and earnestly work to extract what good we can out of the veil that now hangs over our dear land, the day will soon come when the angry cloud will be lifted from our horizon and the sun in his pristine brightness again shine forth. I therefore again anticipate for you many years of happiness and prosperity, and in my daily prayers to the God of mercy and truth, I invoke His choicest blessings upon you. May He gather you under the shadow of His almighty wing, direct you in all your ways, and give you peace and everlasting life. It would be most pleasant to my

feelings could I again, as you propose, gather you all around me; but I fear that will not be in this world. Let us all so live that we may unite in that world where there is no more separation, and where sorrow and pain never come. I think after next year I will have done all the good I can for the college, and I should then like, if peace is restored to the country, to retire to some quiet spot east of the mountains where I might prepare a home for your mother and sisters after my death, and where I could earn my daily bread."[1]

Most men who think, set down on paper, from time to time, the result of their reflections. These reflections are rather memorabilia for ourselves than for others. It throws light on Lee's mind to find among his papers thoughts, set down here and there for his own guidance, which are so in keeping with his conduct that they might almost appear to have been written on the tablets of his heart. Among them we find these:

"God disposes. This ought to satisfy us."

"Charity should begin at home. So says——? No. Charity should have no beginning or ending."

"Those who oppose our purposes are not always to be regarded as our enemies. We usually think and act from our immediate surroundings. (See Macaulay on Machiavelli.)"

"The better rule is to judge our adversaries from their standpoint, not from ours." [2]

[1] R. E. Lee's "Recollections of General Robert E. Lee," p. 260.
[2] Quoted from Long's "Memoir," pp. 485, 486.

Though Lee was too grave to be generally humorous, yet he had a certain dry humor of his own—too shy to be exhibited in public, and too delicate to bear translation in print. To those who knew him it gleams in his letters often with a pleasant glint—as, for example, where he amuses himself over his young unmarried daughter giving advice on the management of husbands and children, or when he writes home from the Springs: "You do not mention the cow; she is of more interest to me than the cats, and is equally destructive of rats." In a letter to one of his sons he says: "We are all as usual—the women of the family very fierce, and the men very mild," a picture which will be appreciated by those who recall the days following the war.

At the end of December, 1868, some one wrote to General Lee suggesting that General Grant, then President of the United States, should be invited to Washington College, to which General Lee replied, under date of January 8, thanking the gentleman for his letter, and saying: "I should be glad if General Grant would visit Washington College, and I should endeavor to treat him with the courtesy and respect due the President of the United States; but if I were to invite him to do so, it might not be agreeable to him, and I fear my motives might be misunderstood at this time, both by himself and others, and that evil would result instead of good. I will, however, bear your suggestion in mind, and should a favorable opportunity offer, I shall be glad to take advantage of it." [1]

[1] R. E. Lee's "Recollections of General R. E. Lee," p. 334.

Though General Grant never visited Washington College, and was never formally invited to do so, General Lee had an informal interview with him at the White House a few months later, when at the end of April he was returning from Baltimore, where he had been attending a meeting with a view to getting the Baltimore and Ohio Railway extended from Staunton to Lexington. It having been intimated to him that it would be most agreeable to General Grant to receive him, he went to Washington from Baltimore on an early train, accompanied by his host and hostess (Mr. and Mrs. Tagart), and was driven immediately to the White House.

It would be most interesting if the minutes of this last meeting between Lee and Grant had been kept, but unfortunately nothing is known of what took place, beyond the fact stated by Captain Lee in his "Recollections" of his father, that "this meeting was of no political significance whatever; but General Lee's visit was simply a call of courtesy," and that during the fifteen minutes of the interview "neither General Lee nor the President spoke a word on political matters."

In the winter of '69 '70, the old trouble of rheumatic pain about the heart, which had first begun during the winter spent "in front of Fredericksburg," recurred, and General Lee was sent off by his physicians to the South in hopes of relieving him. He was accompanied by one of his daughters, Miss Agnes, and his trip was one continued ovation from beginning to end. The whole population wherever he went turned out to do

him honor, and to testify their devotion to him. This reception, however touching to him, was, as he well recognized, not conducive to his restoration. Toward the end of April he turned homeward. "Though the rest and change, the meeting with many old friends, and the great love and kindness shown him by all had given him much pleasure, and for a time it was thought that he was better, the main cause of his trouble was not removed," and in his letters to his wife he was forced to admit that though he felt stronger than when he came, and the warm weather had dispelled some of the rheumatic pains in the back, he could "perceive no change in the stricture in his chest." "If I attempt to walk beyond a very slow gait," he says in one letter, "the pain is always there." And in another: "I hope I am better, and I know that I am stronger; but I still have the pain in my chest whenever I walk."

He returned quietly to his work, and at the beginning of the ensuing session no one would have known that he was not in his usual health. But the burden he had so long carried had been too heavy. The overtaxed heart at length gave way. His last active work was done in a vestry meeting of his church, whose rector was one of his old lieutenants, the Rev. Dr. William N. Pendleton, formerly his chief of artillery; his last conscious act was to ask God's blessing at his board. As he ended, his voice faltered and he sank in his chair.

Surrounded by those who honored and loved him best, he lingered for a few days, murmuring at times orders to one of the best of his lieutenants, the gallant A. P. Hill, who had fallen at Petersburg, after the dis-

aster of Five Forks, till, on the twelfth day of October, 1870, he that was valiant for truth passed quietly to meet the Master he had served so well, "and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side."

Many places claimed the honor of guarding his sepulchre; but to Lexington it was fittingly awarded. Here he lived and here he died, and here in the little mountain town in the Valley of Virginia his sacred ashes lie hard by those of his great lieutenant, who, in the fierce 'sixties, was his right arm. Well may we apply to him his own words, written about the proposal to remove the remains of the Confederate dead from Gettysburg: "I know of no fitter resting-place for a soldier than the field on which he has nobly laid down his life."

Happy the town that has two such shrines! Happy the people that have two such examples! Both have forever ennobled the soldier's profession, where to face death in obedience to duty is a mere incident of life, and whose highest function is not to make war, but to end it. Both were worthy successors of that noble centurion of whom Christ said: "I have not found so great faith; no, not in Israel."

To those of us who knew him in the impressionable time of our youth, as, untouched by the furious railing of his enemies, he passed the evening of his life in unruffled calm, he seems the model of a knightly gentleman, ever loyal to duty and ever valiant for truth.

Well might he have said with that other Valiant-for-Truth: "My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me to be

a witness for me that I have fought His battles who will now be my rewarder."

No sooner had he passed away than the ignoble enemies of the South, safe at the moment from her resentment, set forth anew to insult her people by the rancor of their insults to her honored dead. While her bells were tolling, the halls of Congress and the hostile press rang anew with diatribes against her fallen leader who was, to use the words of one of them, to be left to "the avenging pen of history."

But the wolfish hatred that had hounded him so long and now broke forth in one last bitter chorus was soon drowned in the acclaim of the world that one had passed away whose life had honored the whole human race. The avenging pen of history had already begun to draw the portrait of one worthy to stand beside Washington.

The world had already recognized and fixed him forever among her constellation of great men, and the European press vied with that of the South in rendering him the tribute of honor. Thus, the only effect of the attacks made on him by the enemies of the South was to secure for them the hatred or contempt of the Southern people.

"As obedient to law as Socrates," wrote of him one who had studied his character well, and the type was well chosen. All through his life he illustrated this virtue. Among the foolish charges made by some in the hour of passion was this: that he believed the South would win in the war and achieve its independence, whereupon he would be its idol. In other words, that he was lured by Ambition. Only ignorance wedded to

passion could assert so baseless a charge. Even had he thus imagined that the South might win its independence, Lee was, of all men, the last to be swayed by such a consideration. But, as a fact, we know that it was at a great sacrifice he made his choice and that only the purest motives of love of liberty and obedience to duty influenced his choice. The entrance of Virginia into the Confederacy of the South threw him out of the position to which his rank entitled him. But while others wrangled and scrambled for office and rank, he with utter self-abnegation declared himself "willing to serve anywhere where he could be most useful." And it is known to those who knew him well that at one time he even thought of enlisting as a private in the company commanded by his eldest son, Captain G. W. C. Lee.[1] Such simplicity and virtue are antique.

Field Marshal Viscount Wolseley, referring long afterward to his first meeting with Lee, in the summer of 1862, says: "Every incident in that visit is indelibly stamped on my memory. All he said to me then and during subsequent conversations is still fresh in my recollection. It is natural it should be so, for he was the ablest general and to me seemed the greatest man I ever conversed with, and yet I have had the privilege of meeting Von Moltke and Prince Bismarck. General Lee was one of the few men who ever seriously impressed and awed me with their inherent greatness. Forty years have come and gone since our meeting and yet the majesty of his manly bearing, the genial, winning grace, the sweetness of his smile, and the impressive

[1] Jones's "Life and Letters of Robert E. Lee," p. 164.

dignity of his old-fashioned style of dress come back to me among my most cherished recollections. His greatness made me humble, and I never felt my own insignificance more keenly than I did in his presence. . . . He was, indeed, a beautiful character, and of him it might truthfully be written, 'In righteousness did he judge and make war!'"

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### SOURCES OF CHARACTER

THERE is something in all of us that responds to the magic of military prowess. That wise observer, Dr. Johnson, once said: "Every man thinks meanly of himself for not having been a soldier or been at sea"; and when Boswell said, "Lord Mansfield would not be ashamed of it," he replied, "Sir, if Lord Mansfield were in the presence of generals and admirals who had seen service, he would wish to creep under the table. . . . If Socrates and Charles XII of Sweden were in company, and Socrates should say, 'Follow me and hear a lecture on philosophy,' and Charles XII should say, 'Follow me and help me to dethrone the Czar,' a man would be ashamed to follow Socrates."

Military glory is so dazzling that it blinds wholly most men, and a little all men. An Alexander conquering worlds until he weeps because no more are left to conquer; a Hannibal crossing the Alps and blowing his trumpets outside the very gates of Rome; Cæsar and Napoleon oversweeping Europe with their victorious eagles, are so splendid that the radiance of their achievements makes us forget the men they were. Alexander carousing at Babylon; Cæsar plotting to

overthrow his country's liberties; Napoleon steeping the world in blood, but bickering in his confinement at St. Helena, are not pleasant to contemplate. There the habiliments of majesty are wanting; the gauds of pomp are stripped off and we see the men at their true worth.

Now, let us turn for a moment to Lee. Had we known him only as the victor of Gaines's Mill, Fredericksburg, Manassas, Chancellorsville, and Cold Harbor, we should have, indeed, thought him a supreme soldier. But should we have known the best of him? Without Gettysburg, without the long campaign of 1864, without the siege of Petersburg, and without Appomattox, should we have dreamed of the sublime measure of the man?

History may be searched in vain to find Lee's superior, and only once or twice in its long course will be found his equal. To find his prototype, we must go back to ancient times, to the antique heroes who have been handed down to us by Plutarch's matchless portraiture; yet, as we read their story, we see that we have been given but one side of their character. Their weaknesses have mainly been lost in the lapse of centuries, and their virtues are magnified in the enhaloing atmosphere of time. But, as to Lee, we know his every act.

There was no act nor incident of his life on which a light as fierce as that which beats upon a throne did not fall. He was investigated by high commissions; his every act was examined by hostile prosecutors. His conduct was inquired into by those who had every

incentive of hostility to secure his downfall and his degradation. Yet, amid these fierce assaults, he remained as unmoved as he had stood when he had held the heights of Fredericksburg against the furious attacks of Burnside's intrepid infantry. From this inquisition he came forth as unsoiled as the mystic White Knight of the Round Table. In that vivid glare he stood revealed in the full measure of nobility—the closest scrutiny but brought forth new virtues and disclosed a more rounded character:

"Like Launcelot brave, like Galahad clean."

Had he been Regulus, we know that he would have returned to Carthage with undisquieted brow to meet his doom. Had he been Aristides, we know that he would have faithfully inscribed his name on the shell intrusted to him for his banishment. Had he been Cæsar, none but a fool would have dared to offer him a crown. Ambition could not have tempted him; ease could not have beguiled him; pleasure could not have allured him.

Should we come down to later times, where shall we find his counterpart, unless we take the Bayards, the Sidneys, and the Falklands, the highest of the noblest?

So, to get his character as it is known to thousands, we must take the best that was in the best that the history of men has preserved. Something of Plato's calm there was; all of Sidney's high-mindedness; of Bayard's fearless and blameless life; of the constancy of William the Silent, *tranquillus in arduis*.

But, most of all, he was like Washington. Here—in that great Virginian—and here only, do we find what appears to be an absolute parallel.

Something must account for this wonderful development. Character does not reach such consummate flowering alone and by accidental cause! It is a product of urgent forces, and such a character as Lee's is the product of high forces met in conjunction. Genius may be born anywhere; it is a result of prenatal forces. A Keats may come from a horse-jobber's fireside; a Columbus may spring from a woolcomber's home; a Burns may issue from an Ayrshire cottage; but it is a law of nature that character is a result largely of surrounding conditions, previous or present.

A distinguished scholar has called attention to the resemblance between the Southerners in the Civil War and the Southern Greeks in the Peloponnesian War. He has especially noted the resemblance in certain fundamental elements of character between the Virginians and both the Greeks and the Romans, among the elements of which were a passion for liberty and a passion for dominance. He marks particularly their poise, a poise unaffected by conditions which might startle or seduce. Both, peoples of the South, like the Southern people, their successes were founded upon their character as a people. It was this poise which Lee illustrated so admirably throughout life, a poise which, as Dr. Gildersleeve has said, gave opportunity for, first, the undazzled vision, and then the swoop of the eagle.

Whatever open hostility or carping criticism may say in derogation of Southern life, and it may be admitted that there was liable to be the waste and inertia of all life that is easy and secluded; yet, the obvious, the unanswerable reply is that it produced such a character as Robert E. Lee. As Washington was the consummate flower of the life of Colonial Virginia, so Lee, clinging close to "his precious example," became the perfect fruit of her later civilization.

It was my high privilege to know him when I was a boy. It was also my privilege to see something of that army which followed him throughout the war, and on whose courage and fortitude his imperishable glory as a captain is founded. I question whether in all the army under his command was one man who had his genius; but I believe that in character he was but the type of his order, and as noble as was his, ten thousand gentlemen marched behind him who, in all the elements of private character, were his peers.

As I have immersed myself in the subject of this great captain and noble gentleman, there has appeared to troop before me from a misty past that army on whose imperishable deeds, inspired by love of liberty, is founded the fame of possibly the greatest soldier of our race—that army of the South, composed not only of the best that the South had, but wellnigh of all she had. Gentle and simple, old and young, rich and poor, secessionist and anti-secessionist, with every difference laid aside at the call of duty, animated by one common spirit, love of liberty, they flocked to the defence of

the Southern States. Through four years they withstood to the utmost the fiercest assaults of fortune, and submitted only with their annihilation.

> "The benediction of the o'ercovering heavens
> Fall on their heads like dew, for they were worthy
> To inlay heaven with stars."

Of them, in conclusion, we may use the words of Pericles, spoken over the Athenian dead who fell in the Peloponnesian War:

"So died these men as became Athenians. You, their survivors, must determine to have as unfaltering a resolution in the field, though you may pray that it may have a happier issue. . . . You must yourselves realize the power of Athens, and feed your eyes upon her from day to day, till love of her fills your hearts; then when all her greatness shall break upon you, you must reflect that it was by courage, sense of duty, and the keen feeling of honor in action that men were enabled to do all this, and that no possible failure in an enterprise could make them consent to deprive their country of their valor, but they laid it at her feet as the most glorious contribution they could offer. For this offering of their lives, made in common by them all, each of them individually received that renown which never grows old, and for a sepulchre not so much that in which their bones have been deposited, but that noblest of shrines wherein their glory is laid up to be eternally remembered upon every occasion on which deed or story shall call for commemoration. For heroes have the whole earth for their tomb, and in

lands far from their own where the column with its epitaph declares it, there is enshrined in every breast a record unwritten, with no tablet to preserve it, except that of the heart."

Through more than twice four years their survivors and their children endured what was bitterer than war, and, strong in the consciousness of their rectitude, came out torn and bleeding but victorious, having saved constitutional government for the Union. Such fortitude, such courage, and sublime constancy cannot be in vain. The blood of patriots is the seed of liberty. The history of their valor and their fortitude in defence of constitutional liberty is the heritage of the South, a heritage in which the North will one day be proud to claim a share, as she will be the sharer in their work.

No better words can be used in closing this record than Lee's own words after the battle of Gettysburg:

"They deserved success so far as it can be deserved by heroic valor and fortitude. More may have been required of them than they were able to perform; but my admiration for their noble qualities and confidence in their ability to cope successfully with the enemy have suffered no abatement from the issue of this protracted and sanguinary conflict."

Some day, doubtless, there will stand in the nation's capital a great monument to Lee, erected not only by the Southern people, whose glory it is that he was the fruit of their civilization and the leader of their armies, but by the American people, whose pride it will be that

he was their fellow citizen. Meantime, he has a nobler monument than can be built of marble or of brass. His monument is the adoration of the South; his shrine is in every Southern heart.

# APPENDIXES

# APPENDIX A

## LEE'S ORDER FOR THE BATTLE OF GAINES'S MILL

HEAD-QUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
*June* 24, 1862.

*General Orders No.* 75.

1. General Jackson's command will proceed to-morrow from Ashland toward the Slash Church, and encamp at some convenient point west of the Central Railroad. Branch's Brigade, of A. P. Hill's Division, will also to-morrow evening take position on the Chickahominy near Half-Sink. At three o'clock Thursday morning, 26th inst., General Jackson will advance on the road leading to Pole Green Church, communicating his march to General Branch, who will immediately cross the Chickahominy and take the road leading to Mechanicsville. As soon as the movements of these columns are discovered, General A. P. Hill, with the rest of his division, will cross the Chickahominy near Meadow Bridge and move directly upon Mechanicsville. To aid his advance the heavy batteries on the Chickahominy will, at the proper time, open upon the batteries at Mechanicsville. The enemy being driven from Mechanicsville and the passage across the bridge opened, General Longstreet, with his division and that of General D. H. Hill, will cross the Chickahominy at or near that point, General D. H. Hill moving to the support of Jackson and General Longstreet supporting General A. P. Hill. The four divisions—keeping in communication with each other, and moving *en échelon* on separate roads, if practicable, the left division in advance, with skirmishers and sharp-shooters extending their front—will sweep down the Chickahominy and endeavor to drive the enemy from his position above New Bridge,

General Jackson bearing well to his left, turning Beaver Dam Creek, and taking the direction toward Cold Harbor. They will then press forward toward the York River Railroad, closing upon the enemy's rear and forcing him down the Chickahominy. Any advance of the enemy toward Richmond will be prevented by vigorously following his rear and crippling and arresting his progress.

2. The divisions under Generals Huger and Magruder will hold their positions in front of the enemy against attack and make such demonstrations on Thursday as to discover his operations. Should opportunity offer, the feint will be converted into a real attack, and should an abandonment of his entrenchments by the enemy be discovered, he will be closely pursued.

3. The 3d Virginia Cavalry will observe the Charles City Road. The 5th Virginia, the 1st North Carolina, and the Hampton Legion (cavalry) will observe the Darbytown, Varina, and Osborne Roads. Should a movement of the enemy down the Chickahominy be discovered, they will close upon his flank and endeavor to arrest his march.

4. General Stuart with the 1st, 4th, and 9th Virginia Cavalry, the cavalry of Cobb's Legion, and the Jeff Davis Legion, will cross the Chickahominy to-morrow and take position to the left of General Jackson's line of march. The main body will be held in reserve with scouts well extended to the front and left. General Stuart will keep General Jackson informed of the movements of the enemy on his left, and will co-operate with him in his advance. The 10th Virginia Cavalry, Colonel Davis, will remain on the Nine Mile Road.

5. General Ransom's Brigade, of General Holmes's command, will be placed in reserve on the Williamsburg road by General Huger, to whom he will report for orders.

6. Commanders of divisions will cause their commands to be provided with three days' cooked rations. The necessary ambulances and ordnance trains will be ready to accompany the divisions and receive orders from their respective commanders. Officers in charge of all trains will invariably remain with them.

Batteries and wagons will keep on the right of the road. The chief engineer, Major Stevens, will assign engineer officers to each division, whose duty it will be to make provision for overcoming all difficulties to the progress of the troops. The staff departments will give the necessary instructions to facilitate the movements herein directed.

By command of General Lee.

(Signed) R. H. Chilton,
*Assistant Adjutant-General.*

# APPENDIX B

## EXTRACTS FROM LETTER TO AUTHOR FROM GENERAL MARCUS J. WRIGHT

WASHINGTON, *September* 26, 1907.

* * * * * * * *

The military population (men between eighteen and forty-five years old, not exempt by law) of the Northern States in 1860 was 3,769,020, omitting California, Colorado, Dakota, District of Columbia, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington Territory, and West Virginia, not given in the tables, but which may be stated as aggregating 135,627. This, added to 3,769,020, the military population of eighteen Northern States, makes a total of 3,904,647 subject to military duty in the States and Territories of the North.

The military population of the Southern States (exclusive of Kentucky, Maryland, and Missouri) in 1860 was 1,064,193. Deducting from this number the 86,000 that entered the Federal service and 80,000, the estimated number of Union men who did not take up arms, there remained to the Confederacy 898,184 men capable of bearing arms from which to draw.

It stands thus:

| | |
|---|---|
| Military population of the North . . . . | 3,904,647 |
| Military population of the South . . . . | 898,184 |
| Difference in favor of the North . . . | 3,006,463 |

The military population in 1860:

| | |
|---|---|
| Of Kentucky . . . . . | 180,589 |
| Of Maryland . . . . . | 102,715 |
| Of Missouri . . . . . | 232,781 |
| | 516,085 |

These three States gave to the Federal army 231,509 men. Of these 190,744 were whites and 40,765 were negroes.

An official published statement of the Adjutant-General of the United States Army gives the total number of men called for and furnished to the United States army from April 15, 1861, to the close of the war as 2,865,028 men. Of this number 186,017 were negroes and 494,900 were foreigners.

From all reliable data that could be secured, it has been estimated by the best authorities that the strength of the Confederate armies was about 600,000 men, and of this number not more than two-thirds were available for active duty in the field. The necessity of guarding a long line of exposed sea-coast, of maintaining permanent garrisons at different posts on inland waters and at numerous other points, deprived the Confederate army in the field of an accession of strength.

The large preponderance of Federal forces was manifest in all the important battles and campaigns of the war. The largest force ever assembled by the Confederates was at the Seven Days' fight around Richmond.

General Lee's report showed 80,835 men present for duty when the movement against General McClellan commenced, and the Federal forces numbered 115,249.

At Antietam the Federals had 87,164 and the Confederates 35,255.

At Fredericksburg the Federals had 110,000 and the Confederates 78,110.

At Chancellorsville the Federals had 131,661, of which number only 90,000 were engaged, and the Confederates had 57,212.

At Gettysburg the Federals had 95,000 and the Confederates 44,000.

At the Wilderness the Federals had 141,160 and the Confederates 63,981.

At the breaking of the Confederate lines at Petersburg, April 1, 1865, General Lee commenced his retreat with 32,000 men, and eight days after he surrendered to General Grant, who had a force of 120,000 men.

From the latter part of 1862 until the close of the war, in 1865, there was a constant decrease of the numerical strength of the Confederate army. On the other hand, the records show that during that time the Federal army was strengthened to the extent of 363,390 men.

The available strength of the Confederate army at the close of the war has been the subject of much discussion.

Estimates have been made varying from 150,000 to 250,000 men.

The number of paroles issued to Confederate soldiers may be taken as a basis of calculation. Mr. Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War, on November 22, 1865, made the following official statement of prisoners surrendered by different Confederate armies that were paroled:

| | |
|---|---|
| Army of Northern Virginia | 27,805 |
| Army of Tennessee | 31,243 |
| Army of Missouri | 7,978 |
| Army of Department of Alabama | 42,293 |
| Army of Trans-Mississippi Department | 17,686 |
| Army of Department of Florida | 6,428 |
| | 133,433 |
| Miscellaneous Departments of Virginia | 9,072 |
| Cumberland, Maryland, etc. | 9,377 |
| Department of Washington | 3,390 |
| In Virginia, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, and Texas | 13,922 |
| Nashville and Chattanooga | 5,029 |
| | 40,790 |

These two lists aggregate 174,223, the number of paroled Confederates reported by Secretary Stanton. Those who have estimated the strength of the Confederate army at the close of the war at 250,000 reached that result by adding to the 174,223 the number of men, 75,777, which they assumed to have returned to their homes without paroles. If this were true, it would appear, taking into account the 40,790 men reported as

paroled at various places, that 116,567 Confederate soldiers did not surrender, and were not paroled with the armies to which they belonged.

This is at variance with the estimated strength of these armies just previous to the surrender.

The report of Secretary Stanton is misleading, because it conveys the impression that the 174,223 men reported as paroled were bearing arms at the time of their surrender. An examination of the parole lists shows that such was not the case. These lists embrace men in hospitals, men retired from the army by reason of disability, and non-arms-bearing men who sought paroles as a safeguard. There were Confederate soldiers who returned to their homes without paroles, but they did not exceed in number those embraced in Secretary Stanton's list that were not borne upon the roll.

In April, 1865, the aggregate of present and absent showed the strength of the Confederate army to be about 275,000 men. Of this number 65,387 were in Federal military prisons and 52,000 were absent by reason of disability and other causes. Deducting the total of these two numbers, 117,387, from 275,000, we have 157,613 as showing the full effective strength of the Confederate army at the close of the war:

SUMMARY

| | |
|---|---|
| Strength of Federal army at close of war: | |
| Present | 797,807 |
| Absent | 202,700 |
| | 1,000,507 |
| Strength of Confederate army at close of war: | |
| Present | 157,613 |
| Absent | 117,387 |
| | 275,000 |

* * * * * * * *

(Signed) MARCUS J. WRIGHT.

## EXTRACT FROM LETTER TO AUTHOR FROM COLONEL THOMAS L. LIVERMORE

### GRANT'S ARMY PRESENT FOR DUTY

On the Rapidan and James, April 30, 1864 (68 War Records, 168,198—69 W. R., pp. 195–198–427).

On the James, May 31, 1864, 133,728 (69 W. R., pp. 426, 427).

On the James, January 31, 1865, 99,214 (95 W. R., p. 61).

On the James, February 25, 1865, 98,457 (*ibid.*).

On the James, March 31, 1865, 100,907 (*ibid.*).

### LEE'S ARMY PRESENT FOR DUTY

On the Rapidan and James, Army of Northern Virginia, April 30, 1864, 54,344 (60 W. R., pp. 1,297, 1,298).

Two divisions and McLaws's Brigade (estimated 1,253) of Longstreet's Corps, March 31, 1864, 10,428 [1] (59 W. R., p. 721).

Department of Richmond, April 20, 1864, 7,265 (60 W. R., p. 1,299).

Total, 72,037.

On the James, January 31, 1865, 57,387 [2] (95 W. R., p. 386—95 W. R., pp. 387, 388, 389, 390).

On the James, February 25, 1865, 63,500.[3]

On the James, March 31, 1865, 56,840 [4] (97 W. R., p. 1,331; Warren Court, p. 482).

(Signed) T. L. LIVERMORE.

[1] Colonel Taylor, of Lee's staff, and Longstreet in their books estimate Longstreet's command at 10,000.

[2] Excluding the cavalry of the Valley District, the number of which is not reported, but probably was about 1,000. (Warren Court, p. 482.)

[3] The number of the infantry estimated at about 7 per cent and the cavalry at about 15 per cent more than the "effectives" reported.

[4] The result of deducting estimated losses and desertions reported and estimated, at 6,760 for March, from number given above for February 25.

# APPENDIX C

## LEE'S REPORT OF THE GETTYSBURG CAMPAIGN

HEAD-QUARTERS ARMY NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
*July* 31, 1863.

GENERAL S. COOPER,
*A. and I. General, Richmond, Va.*

*General:* I have the honor to submit the following outline of the recent operations of this army for the information of the department:

The position occupied by the enemy opposite Fredericksburg being one in which he could not be attacked to advantage, it was determined to draw him from it. The execution of this purpose embraced the relief of the Shenandoah Valley from the troops that had occupied the lower part of it during the winter and spring, and, if practicable, the transfer of the scene of hostilities north of the Potomac.

It was thought that the corresponding movements on the part of the enemy, to which those contemplated by us would probably give rise, might offer a fair opportunity to strike a blow at the army therein, commanded by General Hooker, and that in any event that army would be compelled to leave Virginia, and possibly to draw to its support troops designed to operate against other parts of the country. In this way it was supposed that the enemy's plan of campaign for the summer would be broken up, and part of the season of active operations be consumed in the formation of new combinations and the preparations that they would require.

In addition to these advantages, it was hoped that other valuable results might be attained by military success.

Actuated by these and other important considerations that may hereafter be presented, the movement began on the 3d of June. McLaws's Division of Longstreet's Corps left Fredericksburg for Culpeper Court House, and Hood's Division, which was encamped on the Rapidan, marched to the same place.

They were followed on the 4th and 5th by Ewell's Corps, leaving that of A. P. Hill to occupy our lines at Fredericksburg.

The march of these troops having been discovered by the enemy, on the afternoon of the 5th and the following day he crossed a force, amounting to about one army corps, to the south side of the Rappahannock on a pontoon bridge laid down near the mouth of Deep Run. General Hill disposed his command to resist their advance; but as they seemed intended for the purpose of observation rather than attack, the movements in progress were not arrested.

The forces of Longstreet and Ewell reached Culpeper Court House by the 8th, at which point the cavalry, under General Stuart, was also concentrated.

On the 9th a large force of Federal cavalry, strongly supported by infantry, crossed the Rappahannock at Beverley's and Kelly's Fords and attacked General Stuart. A severe engagement ensued, continuing from early in the morning until late in the afternoon, when the enemy was forced to recross the river, with heavy loss, leaving 400 prisoners, 3 pieces of artillery, and several colors in our hands.

General Jenkins, with his cavalry brigade, had been ordered to advance toward Winchester to co-operate with the infantry in the proposed expedition into the lower valley, and at the same time General Imboden was directed, with his command, to make a demonstration in the direction of Romney, in order to cover the movement against Winchester and prevent the enemy at that place from being reinforced by the troops on the line of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Both of these officers were in position when General Ewell left Culpeper Court House on the 10th. Crossing the Shenandoah near Front Royal, he detached Rodes's Division to Berryville, with instructions, after

dislodging the force stationed there, to cut off the communication between Winchester and the Potomac. With the divisions of Early and Johnson, General Ewell advanced directly upon Winchester, driving the enemy into his works around the town on the 13th. On the same day the troops at Berryville fell back before General Rodes, retreating to Winchester. On the 14th General Early stormed the works at the latter place, and the whole army of General Milroy was captured or dispersed. Most of those who attempted to escape were intercepted and made prisoners by General Johnson. Their leader fled to Harper's Ferry with a small party of fugitives.

General Rodes marched from Berryville to Martinsburg, entering the latter place on the 14th, where he took 700 prisoners, 5 pieces of artillery, and a considerable quantity of stores. These operations cleared the valley of the enemy, those at Harper's Ferry withdrawing to Maryland Heights. More than 4,000 prisoners, 29 pieces of artillery, 270 wagons and ambulances, with 400 horses, were captured, besides a large amount of military stores. Our loss was small. On the night that Ewell appeared at Winchester, the Federal troops in front of A. P. Hill at Fredericksburg recrossed the Rappahannock and the next day disappeared behind the hills of Stafford.

The whole army of General Hooker withdrew from the line of the Rappahannock, pursuing the roads near the Potomac, and no favorable opportunity was offered for attack. It seemed to be the purpose of General Hooker to take a position which would enable him to cover the approaches to Washington city. With a view to draw him farther from his base, and at the same time to cover the march of A. P. Hill, who, in accordance with instructions, left Fredericksburg for the valley as soon as the enemy withdrew from his front, Longstreet moved from Culpeper Court House on the 15th, and advancing along the east side of the Blue Ridge, occupied Ashby's and Snicker's Gaps. His force had been augmented while at Culpeper by General Pickett with three brigades of his division.

The cavalry, under General Stuart, was thrown out in front

of Longstreet to watch the enemy, now reported to be moving into Loudoun. On the 17th his cavalry encountered two brigades of ours under General Stuart, near Aldie, and was driven back with loss. The next day the engagement was renewed, the Federal cavalry being strongly supported by infantry, and General Stuart was in turn compelled to retire.

The enemy advanced as far as Upperville and then fell back. In these engagements General Stuart took about 400 prisoners and a considerable number of horses and arms.

In the meantime a part of General Ewell's Corps had entered Maryland, and the rest was about to follow. General Jenkins with his cavalry, who accompanied General Ewell, penetrated Pennsylvania as far as Chambersburg. As these demonstrations did not have the effect of causing the Federal army to leave Virginia, and as it did not seem disposed to advance upon the position held by Longstreet, the latter was withdrawn to the west side of the Shenandoah, General Hill having already reached the valley.

General Stuart was left to guard the passes of the mountains and observe the movements of the enemy, whom he was instructed to harass and impede as much as possible should he attempt to cross the Potomac. In that event, General Stuart was directed to move into Maryland, crossing the Potomac east or west of the Blue Ridge, as in his judgment should be best, and take position on the right of our column as it advanced.

By the 24th the progress of Ewell rendered it necessary that the rest of the army should be in supporting distance, and Longstreet and Hill marched to the Potomac. The former crossed at Williamsport and the latter at Shepherdstown. The columns reunited at Hagerstown, and advanced thence into Pennsylvania, encamping near Chambersburg on the 27th.

No report had been received that the Federal army had crossed the Potomac, and the absence of the cavalry rendered it impossible to obtain accurate information. In order, however, to retain it on the east side of the mountains, after it should enter Maryland, and thus leave open our communications with the

Potomac through Hagerstown and Williamsport, General Ewell had been instructed to send a division eastward from Chambersburg to cross the South Mountains. Early's Division was detached for this purpose, and proceeded as far east as York, while the remainder of the corps proceeded to Carlisle.

General Imboden, in pursuance of the instructions previously referred to, had been actively engaged on the left of General Ewell during the progress of the latter into Maryland. We had driven off the forces guarding the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, destroying all the important bridges on that route from Cumberland to Martinsburg and seriously damaged the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal.

He subsequently took position at Hancock, and, after the arrival of Longstreet and Hill at Chambersburg, was directed to march by way of McConnellsburg to that place.

Preparations were now made to advance upon Harrisburg; but on the night of the 28th information was received from a scout that the Federal army, having crossed the Potomac, was advancing northward, and that the head of the column had reached the South Mountains. As our communications with the Potomac were thus menaced, it was resolved to prevent his further progress in that direction by concentrating our army on the east side of the mountains. Accordingly, Longstreet and Hill were directed to proceed from Chambersburg to Gettysburg, to which point General Ewell was also instructed to march from Carlisle.

General Stuart continued to follow the movements of the Federal army south of the Potomac after our own had entered Maryland, and, in his efforts to impede its progress, advanced as far eastward as Fairfax Court House. Finding himself unable to delay the enemy materially, he crossed the river at Seneca and marched through Westminster to Carlisle, where he arrived after General Ewell had left for Gettysburg. By the route he pursued, the Federal army was interposed between his command and our main body, preventing any communication with him until his arrival at Carlisle.

The march toward Gettysburg was conducted more slowly than it would have been had the movements of the Federal army been known.

The leading division of Hill met the enemy in advance of Gettysburg on the morning of the 1st of July. Driving back these troops to within a short distance of the town, he there encountered a larger force, with which two of his divisions became engaged. Ewell, coming up with two of his divisions by the Heidlersburg Road, joined in the engagement. The enemy were driven through Gettysburg with heavy loss, including about 5,000 prisoners and several pieces of artillery.

He retired to a high range of hills south and east of the town. The attack was not pressed that afternoon, the enemy's force being unknown, and it being considered advisable to await the arrival of the rest of our troops.

Orders were sent to hasten their march, and in the meantime every effort was made to ascertain the numbers and position of the enemy and find the most favorable point of attack. It had not been intended to fight a general battle at such a distance from our base unless attacked by the enemy; but finding ourselves unexpectedly confronted by the Federal army, it became a matter of difficulty to withdraw through the mountains with our large trains. At the same time the country was unfavorable for collecting supplies while in the presence of the enemy's main body, as he was enabled to restrain our foraging parties by occupying the passes of the mountains with regular and local troops. A battle thus became, in a measure, unavoidable. Encouraged by the successful issue of the engagement of the first day, and in view of the valuable results that would ensue from the defeat of the army of General Meade, it was thought advisable to renew the attack.

The remainder of Ewell's and Hill's Corps having arrived, and two divisions of Longstreet's, our preparations were made accordingly. During the afternoon intelligence was received of the arrival of General Stuart at Carlisle, and he was ordered to march to Gettysburg and take position on the left. A full

account of these engagements cannot be given until the reports of the several commanding officers shall have been received, and I shall only offer a general description.

The preparations for attack were not completed until the afternoon of the 2d.

The enemy held a high and commanding ridge, along which he had massed a large amount of artillery. General Ewell occupied the left of our line, General Hill the centre, and General Longstreet the right. In front of General Longstreet the enemy held a position, from which, if he could be driven, it was thought that our army could be used to advantage in assailing the more elevated ground beyond, and thus enable us to reach the crest of the ridge. That officer was directed to endeavor to carry this position, while General Ewell attacked directly the high ground on the enemy's right, which had already been partially fortified. General Hill was instructed to threaten the centre of the Federal line, in order to prevent reinforcements being sent to either wing, and to avail himself of any opportunity that might present itself to attack.

After a severe struggle, Longstreet succeeded in getting possession of and holding the desired ground. Ewell also carried some of the strong positions which he assailed, and the result was such as to lead to the belief that he would ultimately be able to dislodge the enemy. The battle ceased at dark.

These partial successes determined me to continue the assault next day. Pickett, with three of his brigades, joined Longstreet the following morning, and our batteries were moved forward to the position gained by him the day before.

The general plan of attack was unchanged, except that one division and two brigades of Hill's Corps were ordered to support Longstreet.

The enemy in the meantime had strengthened his line with earthworks. The morning was occupied in necessary preparations, and the battle recommenced in the afternoon of the 3d and raged with great violence until sunset. Our troops succeeded in entering the advanced works of the enemy and getting

possession of some of his batteries; but our artillery having nearly expended its ammunition, the attacking columns became exposed to the heavy fire of the numerous batteries near the summit of the ridge, and, after a most determined and gallant struggle, were compelled to relinquish their advantage and fall back to their original positions with severe loss.

The conduct of the troops was all that I could desire or expect, and they deserved success so far as it can be deserved by heroic valor and fortitude. More may have been required of them than they were able to perform, but my admiration of their noble qualities and confidence in their ability to cope successfully with the enemy have suffered no abatement from the issue of this protracted and sanguinary conflict.

Owing to the strength of the enemy's position and the reduction of our ammunition, a renewal of the engagement could not be hazarded, and the difficulty of procuring supplies rendered it impossible to continue longer where we were. Such of the wounded as were in condition to be removed and part of the arms collected on the field were ordered to Williamsport. The army remained at Gettysburg during the fourth and at night began to retire by the road to Fairfield, carrying with it about 4,000 prisoners. Nearly 2,000 had previously been paroled, but the enemy's numerous wounded that had fallen into our hands after the first and second days' engagements were left behind.

Little progress was made that night, owing to a severe storm which greatly embarrassed our movements. The rear of the column did not leave its position near Gettysburg until after daylight on the 5th.

The march was continued during that day without interruption by the enemy, except an unimportant demonstration upon our rear in the afternoon when near Fairfield, which was easily checked. Part of our train moved by the road through Fairfield, and the rest by the way of Cashtown, guarded by General Imboden. In passing through the mountains in advance of the column, the great length of the trains exposed them to attack by the enemy's cavalry, which captured a number of wagons

and ambulances, but they succeeded in reaching Williamsport without serious loss.

They were attacked at that place on the 6th by the enemy's cavalry, which was gallantly repulsed by General Imboden. The attacking force was subsequently encountered and driven off by General Stuart, and pursued for several miles in the direction of Boonsboro. The army, after an arduous march, rendered more difficult by the rains, reached Hagerstown on the afternoon of the 6th and morning of the 7th of July.

The Potomac was found to be so much swollen by the rains that had fallen almost incessantly since our entrance into Maryland as to be unfordable. Our communications with the south side were thus interrupted, and it was difficult to procure either ammunition or subsistence, the latter difficulty being enhanced by the high waters impeding the working of the neighboring mills. The trains with the wounded and prisoners were compelled to await at Williamsport the subsiding of the river and the construction of boats, as the pontoon bridge left at Falling Waters had been partially destroyed. The enemy had not yet made his appearance; but as he was in condition to obtain large reinforcements, and our situation, for the reasons above mentioned, was becoming daily more embarrassing, it was deemed advisable to recross the river. Part of the pontoon bridge was recovered and new boats built, so that by the 13th a good bridge was thrown over the river at Falling Waters.

The enemy in force reached our front on the 12th. A position had been previously selected to cover the Potomac from Williamsport to Falling Waters, and an attack was awaited during that and the succeeding day. This did not take place, though the two armies were in close proximity, the enemy being occupied in fortifying his own lines. Our preparations being completed, and the river, though still deep, being pronounced fordable, the army commenced to withdraw to the south side on the night of the 13th.

Ewell's Corps forded the river at Williamsport, those of Longstreet and Hill crossed upon the bridge. Owing to the condi-

tion of the roads, the troops did not reach the bridge until after daylight on the 14th, and the crossing was not completed until 1 P. M., when the bridge was removed. The enemy offered no serious interruption, and the movement was attended with no loss of material except a few disabled wagons and two pieces of artillery which the horses were unable to move through the deep mud. Before fresh horses could be sent back for them, the rear of the column had passed.

During the slow and tedious march to the bridge, in the midst of a violent storm of rain, some of the men lay down by the way to rest. Officers sent back for them failed to find many in the obscurity of the night, and these, with some stragglers, fell into the hands of the enemy.

Brigadier-General Pettigrew was mortally wounded in an attack made by a small body of cavalry, which was unfortunately mistaken for our own and permitted to enter our lines. He was brought to Bunker Hill, where he expired a few days afterward. He was a brave and accomplished officer and gentleman, and his loss will be deeply felt by the country and the army.

The following day the army marched to Bunker Hill, in the vicinity of which it encamped for several days. The day after its arrival, a large force of the enemy's cavalry, which had crossed the Potomac at Harper's Ferry, advanced toward Martinsburg. It was attacked by General Fitz Lee near Kearneysville, and defeated with heavy loss, leaving its dead and many of its wounded on the field.

Owing to the swollen condition of the Shenandoah River, the plan of operations which had been contemplated when we recrossed the Potomac could not be put in execution, and before the waters had subsided the movements of the enemy induced me to cross the Blue Ridge and take position south of the Rappahannock, which was accordingly done.

As soon as the reports of the commanding officers shall be received, a more detailed account of these operations will be given, and occasion will then be taken to speak more particularly

of the conspicuous gallantry and good conduct of both officers and men.

It is not yet in my power to give a correct statement of our casualties, which were severe, including many brave men and an unusual proportion of distinguished and valuable officers. Among them I regret to mention the following general officers: Major-Generals Hood, Pender, and Trimble, severely, and Major-General Heth slightly, wounded.

General Pender has since died. This lamented officer has borne a distinguished part in every engagement of this army, and was wounded on several occasions while leading his command with conspicuous gallantry and ability. The confidence and admiration inspired by his courage and capacity as an officer were only equalled by the esteem and respect entertained by all with whom he was associated, for the noble qualities of his modest and unassuming character. Brigadier-Generals Barksdale and Garnett were killed and Brigadier-General Semmes mortally wounded while leading their troops with the courage that always distinguished them. These brave officers and patriotic gentlemen fell in the faithful discharge of duty, leaving the army to mourn their loss and emulate their noble examples.

Brigadier-Generals Kemper, Armistead, Scales, G. T. Anderson, Hampton, J. M. Jones, and Jenkins were also wounded. Brigadier-General Archer was taken prisoner. General Pettigrew, though wounded at Gettysburg, continued in command until he was mortally wounded near Falling Waters.

The loss of the enemy is unknown, but from observations on the field and his subsequent movements, it is supposed that he suffered severely.

Respectfully submitted,

R. E. Lee, *General.*

# APPENDIX D

## EXTRACT FROM LETTER TO AUTHOR FROM ANDREW R. ELLERSON, ESQ., OF ELLERSON'S, HANOVER COUNTY, VA.

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, *June* 10, 1908.

* * * * * * * *

Before the battles around Richmond began, my regiment (4th Virginia Cavalry) was encamped on the extreme left of the army, in the neighborhood of Goodall's. The day before the battle of Mechanicsville my company (Company G) was detached from the regiment and camped that night at Emanuel Church, a few miles north of Richmond. The next morning Jack Stark and myself were ordered to report to General Longstreet—for what purpose we had no idea, but congratulated ourselves upon the fact that we should at least make a good breakfast. * * * The evening of the battle of Cold Harbor, General Longstreet got each division of his corps and placed them in position. This was just before the battle commenced. I stood in the front until the bullets were flying thick and fast, and feeling very uncomfortable, and having no business there, I thought I would retire to a hill in the rear where I could have the pleasure of looking on at a battle without being in any apparent danger. Upon this hill I found General Jackson seated entirely alone upon his horse. We had been there some time when a shell burst some few feet to his left, and in a few minutes a second shell burst. Even before this time I had become again very uncomfortable, and would have liked very much to change my position, but I did not like to show the white feather in the presence of General Jackson, who had not winced, but after the second shell had burst near him, he remarked in a quiet way, "When two shells

burst near you it is well to change your position if you can do so," so we both rode some distance to our right and got out of range of the bullets.

That night General Lee and General Longstreet made their head-quarters in Hogan's dwelling. I was sitting on the steps of this building about ten o'clock, when General Jackson rode up with Lincoln Sydnor, who was his guide on this occasion. General Jackson gave his horse to Sydnor to hold and went into the house, as I afterward learned, for a consultation with all of the higher officials of the army. Sydnor told me that the reason General Jackson reached Cold Harbor as late as he did was due to the fact that, although he was very near his old home, and where he was perfectly familiar with the country, the Yankees had cut down so many trees and made so many new roads that he actually got lost, and that just before reaching the point to which General Jackson had directed him to guide him, he found that he was on the wrong road, and had to turn round the artillery in the woods and had to countermarch for quite a distance, which delayed them very materially. Sydnor told me that General Ewell, who was present, wanted to hang him to a tree, but General Jackson said it was all right; that we would get there in plenty of time. You know General Jackson has been frequently blamed for being late on this occasion, and it has often occurred to me that this simple reason may have been the cause of it, although I never heard it so stated. * * *

With best wishes and kind remembrances, I am * * *

Yours,

A. R. Ellerson.

# APPENDIX E

## REPORT OF THE SURRENDER AT APPOMATTOX

NEAR APPOMATTOX COURT HOUSE, VA.,
*April* 12, 1865.

HIS EXCELLENCY, JEFFERSON DAVIS.

*Mr. President:* It is with pain that I announce to your Excellency the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia. The operations which preceded this result will be reported in full. I will, therefore, only now state that upon arriving at Amelia Court House on the morning of the 4th with the advance of the army on the retreat from the lines in front of Richmond and Petersburg, and not finding the supplies ordered to be placed there, nearly twenty-four hours were lost in endeavoring to collect in the country subsistence for men and horses. This delay was fatal, and could not be retrieved. The troops, wearied by continual fighting and marching for several days and nights, obtained neither rest nor refreshment, and on moving, on the 5th, on the Richmond and Danville Railroad, I found at Jetersville the enemy's cavalry, and learned the approach of his infantry and the general advance of his army toward Burkeville. This deprived us of the use of the railroad, and rendered it impracticable to procure from Danville the supplies ordered to meet us at points of our march. Nothing could be obtained from the adjacent country. Our route to the Roanoke was, therefore, changed and the march directed upon Farmville, where supplies were ordered from Lynchburg. The change of route threw the troops over the roads pursued by the artillery and wagon trains west of the railroad, which impeded our advance and embarrassed our movements. On the morning of the 6th General Longstreet's Corps reached Rice's Station, on

the Lynchburg Railroad. It was followed by the commands of Generals R. H. Anderson, Ewell, and Gordon, with orders to close upon it as fast as the progress of the trains would permit or as they could be directed on roads farther west. General Anderson, commanding Pickett's and B. R. Johnson's Divisions, became disconnected with Mahone's Division, forming the rear of Longstreet. The enemy's cavalry penetrated the line of march through the interval thus left and attacked the wagon train moving toward Farmville. This caused serious delay in the march of the centre and rear of the column and enabled the enemy to mass upon their flank. After successive attacks Anderson's and Ewell's Corps were captured or driven from their position. The latter general, with both of his division commanders, Kershaw and Custis Lee, and his brigadiers were taken prisoners. Gordon, who all the morning, aided by General W. H. F. Lee's Cavalry, had checked the advance of the enemy on the road from Amelia Springs and protected the trains, became exposed to his combined assaults, which he bravely resisted and twice repulsed; but the cavalry having been withdrawn to another part of the line of march, and the enemy, massing heavily on his front and both flanks, renewed the attack about 6 P. M. and drove him from the field in much confusion. The army continued its march during the night, and every effort was made to reorganize the divisions which had been shattered by the day's operations; but the men being depressed by fatigue and hunger, many threw away their arms, while others followed the wagon trains and embarrassed their progress. On the morning of the 7th rations were issued to the troops as they passed Farmville, but the safety of the trains requiring their removal upon the approach of the enemy, all could not be supplied. The army, reduced to two corps under Longstreet and Gordon, moved steadily on the road to Appomattox Court House; thence its march was ordered by Campbell Court House, through Pittsylvania, toward Danville. The roads were wretched and the progress slow. By great efforts the head of the column reached Appomattox Court House on the evening of the 8th and the

troops were halted for rest. The march was ordered to be resumed at 1 A. M. on the 9th. Fitz Lee with the cavalry, supported by Gordon, was ordered to drive the enemy from his front, wheel to the left and cover the passage of the trains, while Longstreet, who from Rice's Station had formed the rear guard, should close up and hold the position. Two battalions of artillery and the ammunition wagons were directed to accompany the army, the rest of the artillery and wagons to move toward Lynchburg. In the early part of the night the enemy attacked Walker's artillery train near Appomattox Station, on the Lynchburg Railroad, and were repelled. Shortly afterward their cavalry dashed toward the Court House till halted by our line. During the night there were indications of a large force massing on our left and front. Fitz Lee was directed to ascertain its strength and to suspend his advance till daylight if necessary. About 5 A. M. on the 9th, with Gordon on his left, he moved forward and opened the way. A heavy force of the enemy was discovered opposite Gordon's right, which, moving in the direction of Appomattox Court House, drove back the left of the cavalry and threatened to cut off Gordon from Longstreet, his cavalry at the same time threatening to envelop his left flank. Gordon withdrew across the Appomattox River, and the cavalry advanced on the Lynchburg Road and became separated from the army. Learning the condition of affairs on the lines, where I had gone under the expectation of meeting General Grant to learn definitely the terms he proposed in a communication received from him on the 8th, in the event of the surrender of the army, I requested a suspension of hostilities until these terms could be arranged. In the interview which occurred with General Grant in compliance with my request, terms having been agreed on, I surrendered that portion of the Army of Northern Virginia which was on the field, with its arms, artillery, and wagon trains, the officers and men to be paroled, retaining their side arms and private effects. I deemed this course the best under all the circumstances by which we were surrounded. On the morning of the 9th, according to the reports of the ordnance

officers, there were 7,892 organized infantry with arms, with an average of seventy-five rounds of ammunition per man. The artillery, though reduced to sixty-three pieces with ninety-three rounds of ammunition, was sufficient. These comprised all the supplies of ordnance that could be relied on in the State of Virginia. I have no accurate report of the cavalry, but believe it did not exceed 2,100 effective men. The enemy was more than five times our numbers. If we could have forced our way one day longer, it would have been at a great sacrifice of life, and at its end I did not see how a surrender could have been avoided. We had no subsistence for man or horse and it could not be gathered in the country. The supplies ordered to Pamplin's Station from Lynchburg could not reach us, and the men, deprived of food and sleep for many days, were worn out and exhausted.

With great respect, your obedient servant,

R. E. Lee, *General.*

# INDEX

# INDEX

NOTE.—Union officers are indicated by *U.*; Confederate officers by *C.*


ADAMS, CHARLES FRANCIS, SR., 45, 67; his opinion of Lee's army, 304–305; prevents the delivery of iron-clads by England to the Confederacy, 506–507; quoted, 508.
Adams, John Quincy, his views on secession, 45, 46.
Alexander, Gen. E. P., *C.*, quoted, 293, 336; 340, 344, 423, 569, 572, 573.
Allan, Col. Wm., *C.*, quoted, 159, 163, 170, 179, 188.
Amelia Court House, Lee at, 549 *ff.*
Anderson, Gen. G. T., *C.*, 402, 713.
Anderson, Gen. J. R., *C.*, 165.
Anderson, Gen. R. H., *C.*, 199, 207, 236, 270, 271, 274, 275, 277, 278, 289, 292, 293, 298, 321, 322, 328, 336, 337, 341, 390, 396, 399, 402, 404, 407, 420, 431, 436, 437, 438, 449, 453, 466, 475, 477, 478, 479, 526, 527, 532, 535, 542, 548, 550, 551, 553, 554, 555, 556.
Anne, Queen, 4.
Antietam, battle of, 231 *ff.*
Archer, Gen. J. J., *C.*, 165, 166, 258, 278, 322, 325, 326, 330.
Armistead, Gen. Lewis A., *C.*, 141, 159, 181, 182, 713.
Averell, Gen. Wm. W., *U.*, 286, 386, 445, 469.
Ayres, Gen. R. B., *U.*, 531.

BABCOCK, COL. O. E., *U.*, 573.
Banks, Gen. N. P., *U.*, 129, 135, 136, 149, 157, 192, 194, 199.
Barker, Dr. Fordyce, 577.
Barksdale, The Hon. E., Lee's letter to, 589–590.
Barksdale, Gen. Wm., *C.*, 256, 336, 713.
Barlow, Gen. Francis C., *U.*, 278, 280, 281, 282, 327, 412, 440, 476, 557, 558.
Bartlett, Gen. Wm. F., *U.*, 474.
Battle, Gen. Cullen A., *C.*, 413.
Beauregard, Gen. P. G. T., *C.*, 63, 89, 301, 302, 426, 427, 428, 429, 431, 447, 451, 452, 480, 501, 512, 585.
Benham, Gen. H. W., *U.*, 548, 549.
Benjamin, C. F., Sec'y of War, *C.*, 586.
Bennings, Gen. H. L., *C.*, 336, 402.
Berry, Gen. Hiram G., *U.*, 282.
Bigelow, John, quoted, 491–492.
Birney, Gen. D. B., *U.*, 334, 454, 455, 475, 476, 479, 550.
Blair, The Hon. Francis P., *U.*, 39.
Blair, The Hon. Montgomery, 39.
Bledsoe, Professor, 297.
Blow, Henry T., 658.
Boston, Colonel, *C.*, death of, 557.
Bragg, Gen. Braxton, *C.*, 218, 302, 365, 518.
Branch, Gen. L. O'Brien, *C.*, 160, 165, 166, 178, 695.
Breckinridge, Gen. J. C., *C.*, 424, 431, 436, 437, 439, 441, 444, 446, 501, 518, 593; secretary of war, 594; 597, 612.
Brockenborough, Judge, offers Lee presidency of Washington College, 648.
Brockenborough, Lieut. Austin, *C.*, 322.
Brooks, Gen. J. A. J., *U.*, 260.
Brown, Col. J. T., *C.*, 278.
Buchanan, Pres. James, 654.
Buckner, Gen. S. B., *C.*, 124, 302.
Buell, Gen. D. C., *U.*, 124, 218.
Buford, Gen. John, *U.*, 323, 325, 326.
Bull Run, battles of; *see* Manassas.

Burnside, Gen. A. E., *U.*, 88, 100, 193, 199, 218, 231, 237, 248; supersedes McClellan and changes plan of campaign against Lee, 253 *ff.*; loses battle of Fredericksburg, 255 *ff.*; superseded by Hooker, 261; 384, 414, 415, 417, 419, 420, 421, 429, 432, 434, 436, 437, 439, 440, 444, 470, 472, 473, 599, 623, 627, 686.
Butler, Gen. Benj. F., *U.*, 124, 384, 385, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 441, 447, 450, 451, 457, 465, 478, 482, 484, 499, 509; relieved, 510; 627.
Butler, Gen. M. C., *C.*, 435.

Cameron, The Hon. Simon, *U.*, quoted, 39.
Campbell, Judge J. A., quoted, 584, 593.
Carter, Anne, mother of R. E. Lee, 5, 12.
Carter, Robert, 12.
Carter, Col. Thos. H., *C.*, 290, 570; quoted, 619.
Carter, Capt. William Page, 417.
Casey, Gen. Silas, *U.*, 159.
Chancellorsville, battle of, 266 *ff.*; credit for Confederate victory, 296 *ff.*
Charles II, offered a kingdom in Virginia by Richard Lee, 4.
Chilton, Gen. R. H., *C.*, 697.
Clingman, Gen. Thos. L., *C.*, 426.
Cobb, Gen. Howell, *C.*, 629.
Cobb, Gen. Thos. R. R., *C.*, 629.
Cochrane, Gen. John, *U.*, 260.
Cold Harbor, battle of, 173; second battle of, 438 *ff.*
Coler, Colonel, *C.*, 511.
Cook, Gen. J. R., *C.*, 535.
Cooper, Gen. S., *C.*, Lee's report of the Gettysburg campaign to, 703–713.
Corse, Gen. M. D., *C.*, 527, 529, 531; captured, 556.
Couch, Gen. D. N., *C.*, 287, 292, 319.
Cox, Gen. J. D., *U.*, 218, 237, 629.
Crawford, Gen. G. W., *U.*, 477, 531.
Crook, Gen. George, *U.*, 445, 469, 528, 552, 554, 557.
Cross Keys, battle of, 137, 157.
Custer, Gen. Geo. A., *U.*, 339, 376, 532, 550.
Custis. Mary Parke, her marriage to R. E. Lee, 18; Lee's letters to, *cf.* Lee, R. E.
Cutler, Gen. Lysander, *U.*, 325.
Cutshaw, Maj. W. E., *C.*, 417, 469.

Dahlgren, Col. Ulric, *U.*, 375, 376.
Dana, Richard H., quoted, 381–382.
Daniel, John W., 417.
Daniel, Gen. Junius, *C.*, 321, 413; killed, 419.
Davies, Gen. H. E., Jr., *U.*, 528.
Davis, Jefferson, 93, 94; quoted, 114; 115; his high opinion of Lee, 115, 116; 118–119, 131, 133, 136; appoints Lee in command of Confederate forces, 141; quoted, 146–147; 152, 199, 216 *ff.*, 268, 301–303, 325; correspondence with Lee, 358–362; 366, 377, 402; Lee's letter to, 495; 503, 510, 511, 512; notified by Lee that Richmond should be evacuated, 540; Lee's letter to, 541–543; notified of Lee's surrender, 578; the interference of his administration in Lee's plans, 580 *ff.*; his confidence in Lee, 581; 592. 593; quoted, 594–595; his high opinion of Lee, 596; 605; Lee's letters to, 605 *ff.*; 608, 609, 616, 642, 649, 655; Lee's report to, of the surrender at Appomattox, 716–719.
Davis, Gen. J. C., *U.*, 629.
Davis, Col. J. L., *C.*, 696.
Davis, Gen. J. R., *C.*, 535.
Dearing, Gen. James, *C.*, 426, 450, 477; death of, 557.
Deshler, Lieut. James, *C.*, 95.
Devin, Gen. Thos. C., *U.*, 323, 528, 532.
Dix, Governor, 315.
Doles, Gen. Geo., *C.*, 322, 413, 420.
Doubleday, Gen. A., *U.*, 232, 233, 326.
Douglass, Col. M., *C.*, 232.
Dubose, Gen. D. M., *C.*, captured, 556.
DuPont, Adm. Sam. F., *U.*, 124.

Early, Gen. J. A., *C.*, 233, 234, 246, 256, 258, 279, 292, 293, 298, 318, 321, 327, 330, 338, 370, 412, 414, 415, 417, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 444, 446, 447, 459; saves Lynchburg, 460; sent by Lee to threaten Washington, 460 *ff.*, 468, 469, 477, 479, 501, 705, 707.
Egan, Gen. Thos. W., *U.*, 483.
Ellerson, Andrew R., 187; his letter to author, 714–715.
Elliott, Gen. St., Jr., *C.*, 473, 474.
Elzey, Gen. A., *C.*, 302.
Evans, Gen. N. C., *C.*, 209, 418.
Ewell, Gen. Rich. S., *C.*, 153, 168, 174, 175, 176, 181, 187, 197, 205, 208; succeeds Stonewall Jackson, 298; 310, 314, 315, 316, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 324, 325, 327, 328, 329, 330, 332, 334, 337, 339, 341, 350, 355, 367, 370, 396, 397, 398, 404, 411, 420, 422, 431, 436, 480, 546, 548, 549, 551, 553, 554, 555; captured, 556; 560, 673, 704, 705, 706, 708, 709, 711, 715, 717.

Farragut, Adm. D. G., *U.*, flag officer, 124, 505.
Ferrero, Gen. Edw. *U.*, 260, 473.
Field, Gen. Chas. W., *C.*, 165, 166, 400, 402, 403, 451, 453, 471, 475, 478, 484, 539.
Five Forks, battle of, 529 *ff.*
Floyd, Gen. John B., *C.*, 102, 104, 106, 110–111, 622.
Forrest, Gen. N. B., *C.*, 505.
Foster, Gen. R. S., *U.*, 539.
Franklin, Gen. Wm. B., *U.*, 149, 150, 170, 180, 212, 227, 238, 257, 259, 260, 468.
Frasier's Farm, battle of, 178–179.
Fredericksburg, battle of, 255 *ff.*
Freemantle, Colonel, 633.
Fremont, Gen. John C., *U.*, 135, 136, 138, 144, 149, 157, 192, 194.
French, Gen. Wm. H., *U.*, 170, 173, 236, 369.
Fulton, Colonel, *C.*, 532.

Gaines's Mill, battle of, 173.
Gamble, Gen. W., *U.*, 323.
Garber, A. W., 417.
Garnett, Gen. R. B., *C.*, 713.
Garnett, Gen. Robert S., *C.*, 99.
Gary, Gen. M. W., *C.*, 484, 546.
Gemieson, Major, 7.
Getty, Gen. Geo. W., *U.*, 397, 399, 463, 555.
Gettysburg, battle of, 304 *ff.*, 320 *ff.*
Gibbon, Gen. John, *U.*, 257, 540, 558.
Gildersleeve, Dr., 687.
Glendale, battle of, 178–179.
Gordon, Gen. G. H., *U.*, quoted, 241.
Gordon, Gen. J. B., *C.*, 321, 327, 329, 389, 404, 411, 413, 419, 520, 521, 522, 535, 537, 539, 541, 550, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 559, 570, 571, 717, 718.
Gorgas, Gen. Josiah, *C.*, 73.
Gracie, Gen. Arch., *C.*, 451, 527, 532.
Grant, General U. S., *U.*, as a slaveholder, 57; as a commander, 68; 148, 245, 253, 306; supersedes Meade, 357, 379 *ff.*; author's opinion of his character, 379–380; R. H. Dana's description of, 381–382; Meade's relation to, 382–383; plans destruction of Lee's army, 383 *ff.*; crosses the Rapidan, 385; in the Wilderness campaign, 388 *ff.*, 395 *ff.*; at Spottsylvania Court House, 410 *ff.*; fails to destroy Lee's army, 429; crosses the Pamunkey, 434; defeated at Second Cold Harbor, 438; crosses to the south side of the James, 447; his Wilderness campaign discussed, 448; plans to seize Petersburg, 449; fails to capture Petersburg by assault, 452–454, 470 *ff.*; sends Wright to strengthen Washington against Early, 463; Halleck's dependence on, 468; compared with Lee, 488 *ff.*; commands complete confidence in Washington, 517; compels Lee to abandon Richmond, 535; his army at Appomattox compared with Lee's, 561 *ff.*; reaches his zenith, 566; asks Lee to surrender, 566; letters with Lee

concerning surrender, 567 *ff.*; generous toward Lee in conditions of surrender, 574 *ff.*; 599; his desire for peace, 611 *ff.*; his magnanimity at Appomattox praised, 638; his noble attitude toward Lee after the war, 643; 677; Lee's interview with, at the White House, 678; statistics of his armies, 698–702, 718.
Grant, Mrs. U. S., 611.
Gravelly Run, battle of, 527.
Gray, Lieut.-Col., 166.
Greeley, Horace, criticises Lincoln's methods, 241.
Greene, General, quoted, 9.
Gregg, Gen. D. McM., *U.*, 316, 364, 367, 475, 476, 483, 528, 557, 558.
Gregg, Gen. John, *C.*, 402.
Gregg, Gen. J. I., *U.*, 339.
Gregg, Gen. M., *C.*, 165, 166, 258.
Griffin, Gen. C., *U.*, 396, 531, 551.
Grigsby, Col. A. J., *C.*, 233, 244.

Hagood, Gen. J., *C.*, 478.
Halleck, Gen. H. W., *U.*, appointed commander-in-chief of U. S. army, 192; 197, 202, 212, 230, 251, 319, 349, 353, 444, 445, 447, 501, 628, 630.
Hallowell, R. E. Lee's teacher, 15–16.
Hampton, Gen. Wade, *C.*, 64, 412, 435, 444, 446, 455, 476, 483, 629, 645, 713.
Hancock, Gen. W. S., *U.*, 317, 328, 329, 330, 331, 338, 384, 396, 397, 398, 400, 403, 404, 412, 413, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 429, 430, 432, 434, 436, 437, 439, 440, 450, 454, 470, 471, 472, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 481, 482, 483.
Hardee, Gen. W. J., *C.*, 514.
Harris, Gen. N. H., *C.*, 419; *cf.* 539.
Hays, Gen. Alex., *U.*, 232, 282, 321, 338.
Heckman, Gen. Chas. A., *U.*, 428.
Heintzelman, Gen. Sam. P., *U.*, 137, 139, 150, 159, 180.
Henderson, Gen. G. F. R., quoted, 48, 57–60, 69–70, 74 *n.*, 75 *n.*, 76, 77–78, 163, 171, 172, 188, 201, 212, 214, 220, 235–236, 237, 239, 240, 247–248, 265, 286, 297, 300–301, 307, 347–348, 393, 581.
Heth, Gen. Henry, *C.*, 289, 298, 309, 321, 322, 325, 326, 327, 330, 341, 356, 397, 398, 399, 401, 412, 439, 471, 477, 483, 535; takes Hill's place on latter's death, 538, 545, 558, 713.
Hill, Gen. A. P., *C.*, 146, 151, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166–167, 168, 169, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 188, 191, 198, 229, 237, 256, 258, 285, 286, 298, 310, 315, 316, 318, 321, 322, 325, 326, 327, 328, 330, 334, 337, 353, 367, 419, 421, 455, 477, 478, 526, 527, 535; death of, 537; 679, 695, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 711; *cf.* 140, 208, 209, 228, 234, 324, 396, 401, 411, 431, 436, 439, 449, 453, 471, 480.
Hill, Senator B. H., 608–609.
Hill, Gen. D. H., 151, 159, 160, 164, 167, 168, 181, 182, 185, 221, 223, 224, 226, 227, 233, 236, 256, 302, 695; *cf.* 140, 208, 209, 228, 234.
Hoke, Gen. R. F., *C.*, 321, 338, 428, 431, 437, 438, 451, 471, 481, 484, 498.
Holcombe, quoted, 16.
Holmes, Gen. T. H., *C.*, 91, 143, 177, 178, 180, 181, 696.
Hood, Gen. John B., *C.*, 146, 168, 171, 172, 209, 231, 232, 233, 234, 239, 265, 298, 322, 335, 336, 341, 346, 365; supersedes Johnston, 506; 623, 704, 713.
Hooker, Gen. Joseph, *U.*, 159, 178, 209, 231, 232, 233, 260; supersedes Burnside in command of Army of the Potomac, 261; Lincoln's letter to, 264–265; defeated at Chancellorsville, 267; Lee's opinion of, 268, 295–296; defeated at Salem Church, 293; retreats across the Rappahannock, 294; is superseded by Meade, 319; 339, 355, 356, 378, 386, 395, 504, 599, 623, 703, 705.
Howard, Jacob M., 657.
Howard, Gen. O. O., *U.*, 270, 276, 278, 279, 280, 281, 326, 629.

Howell, Col. J. B., *U.*, 504.
Huger, Gen. Benj., *C.*, 131, 139, 141, 151, 164, 170, 176, 178, 180, 181, 183, 191, 696.
Humphreys, Gen. A. A., *U.*, 292, 334, 405, 408, 410; quoted, 425, 427, 429, 438, 442, 485; 524, 525, 528, 534, 538, 557, 558, 567, 568, 569, 571.
Hunter, Gen. David, *U.*, 218; his ruthless destruction, 444–446; 447, 460, 467, 501, 627–628, 631.
Hunter, Robert M., 417.
Hunton, Gen. E., *C.*, 438, 527, 550; captured, 556.

Imboden, Gen. J. D., *C.*, 322, 445, 704, 707, 710, 711.
Iverson, Gen. A., *C.*, 321.

Jackson, Andrew, 16.
Jackson, Gen. H. R., *C.*, 102, 110, 120.
Jackson, Gen. Thos. J. ("Stonewall"), *C.*, 87, 91, 100, 128, 135, 137, 146, 149; Lee's letter to, 152; 156–160; his delay at Ashland, 161–168; explanation thereof, 171; 177, 178, 180, 181, 183; his slowness around Richmond, 185–188; 195; advances against Pope, 197–199; sent by Lee to circle Pope's right, 202; successful in battle of Second Manassas, 206 *ff.*; 220, 222, 223, 226, 227; captures Harper's Ferry, 228; 231, 234, 235, 239, 240, 246, 249; Lee's letter to, 250–251; 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 260, 261, 266, 270, 274, 275, 276; sent by Lee around Hooker's right at Chancellorsville, 266 *ff.*; shot by accident at moment of victory, 283 *ff.*; Lee's high opinion of, 287–288; given credit for victory at Chancellorsville, 288, 291, 297; death of, 296; 392, 458, 488, 586, 695, 696, 714; explanation of his delay at Cold Harbor, 715.
Jefferson, Thomas, 10
Jenkins, Gen. M., *C.*, 178, 389; death of, 403; 704, 706, 713.
Johnson, Pres. Andrew, 642, 643, 650, 654.
Johnson, Gen. Bradley T., *C.*, 455, 462.
Johnson, Gen. Bushrod R., *C.*, 498, 526, 551, 717.
Johnson, Gen. Edw. C., 103, 298, 321, 338, 341, 411, 417, 418, 451, 457, 471, 527, 705.
Johnson, Hon. Reverdy, Lee's letter to, 40.
Johnston, Gen. Albert Sydney, *C.*, 28, 124, 380, 392; *cf.* 360.
Johnston, Gen. Joseph E., *C.*, 17–18, 28, 87–88, 91, 119, 123, 127, 129, 131, 132; assumes command against McClellan, 133; 134, 138; death of, 140; 253, 308, 392, 488, 490, 503, 504; superseded by Hood, 505; 506; reinstated by Lee, 514; 515, 516, 518, 519, 523; surrenders to Sherman, 578; 585, 586, 597, 600.
Johnston, R. H., 418.
Jones, Gen. D. R., *C.*, 237.
Jones, Col. Hilary P., *C.*, 290.
Jones, Gen. J. M., *C.*, 713.
Jones, Gen. J. R., *C.*, 232, 233, 321, 445.
Jones, Rev. Dr. J. W., quoted, 55, 498; 671.
Joynes, Dr. Edward S., quoted, 660.

Kautz, Gen. Albert, *U.*, 450, 456, 482.
Kearny, Gen. Phil., *U.*, 159, 209, 213.
Kemper, Gen. J. L., *C.*, 713.
Kershaw, Gen. J. B., *C.*, 334, 336, 389, 400, 402, 422, 438, 439, 453, 469, 471, 546, 555; captured, 556; 717.
Keyes, Gen. E. D., *U.*, 137, 139, 143, 150.
Kilpatrick, Gen. Judson, *U.*, 351, 367, 376.
King, Gen. Rufus, *U.*, 206, 623.

Lane, Gen. J. H., *C.*, 258, 322, 419, 420, 535, 539.
Lang, Col. David, *C.*, 336, 337.
Latané, Capt. Wm., 154.

Law, Gen. E. McI., *C.*, 168, 333, 335, 336, 402.
Lawler, Colonel, 77.
Lawton, Gen. A. R., *C.*, 153, 168, 232, 233; Lee's letters to, 495–496, 603–604.
Lee, Richard, founder of the Lee family in America, offers Charles II a kingdom in Virginia, 4, 6.
Lee, Thomas, grandson of Richard Lee, builds "Stratford" in Virginia, 3–4.
Lee, Francis Lightfoot, uncle of R. E. Lee, 4.
Lee, Richard Henry, father of R. E. Lee, 4; active in Revolutionary War, 6–9; 10, 11; his letter to Mr. Madison, 44.
Lee, Robert E., birth of, 4; ancestry of, 5–9; influence of Washington's character on, 9–13; his boyhood character and devotion to his mother, 13–14; early education, 15; enters West Point, 16; Joseph E. Johnston's opinion of, 17–18; marries Mary Parke Custis, 18; his first service, 19–20; his engineering work on the Mississippi, 21; his work at Ft. Hamilton, 22; brilliant service in the Mexican War, 22–27; superintendent of West Point, 28; service on the southwestern frontier, 28; captures John Brown, 29; letters to his wife quoted, 30–31; his love for children and animals, 32–33; letters to his oldest son, 34–35; manumits his slaves, 37; his views on slavery, 37–38; offered command of U. S. army by Lincoln, 38–40; resigns his commission in U. S. army, 40; his attitude toward secession discussed, 41–49; letter to his wife showing his feeling for the United States, 52–53; his opposition to a dissolution of the Union, 53–54; letter to Gen. Scott, 55–56; letters to his brother and sister, 61–62; letter to his wife, 63; letter to General Beauregard, 63–64; his letter to Capt. James May, 64; his greatness as a soldier and the resources at his command, 67–79; receives commission of major-general of the Virginia forces, 80–81; his reply to Hon. John Janney, 81–82; letters to his wife, 83–84, 92–94; his farsightedness as to the length of the war, 96–98; assumes command of West Virginia, 103; letter to his wife, 103–105, 106, 108–109; letter to Governor Letcher, 109–110; fails to capture Rosecrans at Sewell Mountain, 110–113; letter to his wife, 111–112; failure of his first campaign, 114–115; designs and constructs Carolina coast defences, 115–118; letters to his wife, 117–118; appointed military adviser to Jefferson Davis, 118; letter to his wife, 130; his proposed plan of campaign against McClellan, 133, 134; offers to assist Johnston, 140; placed in command of the Confederate forces, 141; his first order to the Confederate Army, 142; meets his generals at conference, 145–147; repulses McClellan on the Chickahominy and at Malvern Hill, 148; his plans for McClellan's destruction, 152–153; defence of Richmond, 145–184; defeats McClellan at Gaines's Mill and Cold Harbor, 173; his report quoted, 175–176; pursues McClellan and saves Richmond, 176–185, 189–190; his plans against Pope, 197; sends Jackson to circle Pope's right, 202; wins battle of Second Manassas, 206 *ff.*; letters to Jefferson Davis, 216–219; his proclamation to Maryland fails to win response, 220; his audacity against McClellan, 225 *ff.*; makes a stand at Sharpsburg, 231 *ff.*; refuses to retreat after Antietam, 240; declaration to his army, 242–243; letter to Jackson, 250–251; wins battle of Fredericksburg, 255 *ff.*; at the zenith of his fame, 262; letter to his wife showing his

modesty, 262–263; wins at Chancellorsville, 267 *ff.*; gives Jackson credit for victory at Chancellorsville, 288, 291, 297; defeats Hooker at Salem Church, 293; compels Hooker to retreat across the Rappahannock, 294; his general plan of campaign presented in letter to Jefferson Davis, 301–303; plans to invade the North, 309; not informed by Stuart that Meade was at Gettysburg, 309; marches his army into Maryland and Pennsylvania, 309; letter to his wife, 311; in letter to Jefferson Davis he indicates the need of making peace, 312–314; at Gettysburg, 305 *ff.*, 320 *ff.*; does not charge Longstreet with responsibility for defeat at Gettysburg, 344; Lee's letters to his wife, 351, 352, 354, 355; correspondence with Jefferson Davis after Gettysburg, 351, 357, 358–362; letter to his wife, 366, 368–369, 371, 373; 375; letter to his son, 374–375; letters showing condition of Confederate army after Gettysburg, 372 *ff.*; narrowly escapes capture, 375; defends Richmond in the Wilderness campaign, 388 *ff.*, 395 *ff.*; thwarts Grant at Spottsylvania Court House, 410 *ff.*; outstrips Grant for the North Anna, 430; his sudden illness at the North Anna, 434; letter to his wife, 434; wins battle of Second Cold Harbor, 438 *ff.*; stops Hunter's destructive course, 444 *ff.*; crosses the Chickahominy, 449; hastens to aid Beauregard at Petersburg, 453; sends Early to threaten Washington, 460; his defence of Petersburg and Richmond, 476 *ff.*; condition of his army during last winter of war, 486, 492–493; compared with Grant, 488 *ff.*; letters to his wife, to Jefferson Davis, and to others, showing lack of supplies in his army, 494 *ff.*; too tardily given complete command of all the Confederate armies, 510; reinstates Johnston, 514; plans destruction of Sherman's army, 516; letter to his wife, 518–519; advises evacuation of Richmond, 540; letters to Jefferson Davis, showing his serenity, 541–543; at "the last ditch," 519 *ff.*; defeated at Five Forks, 533 *ff.*; withdraws from the James, 545; his retreat to Appomattox, 545 *ff.*; his plan of retreat on Danville found by Weitzel, 547 *ff.*; at Amelia Court House, 549 *ff.*; at Rice's Station, 554 *ff.*; rejects idea of unconditional surrender, 559–560; his army at that time compared with Grant's, 561 *ff.*; reaches his zenith, 566; asked by Grant to surrender, 566; letters of negotiation of surrender, 567 *ff.*; fights his last battle, 570; conditions of surrender, 574; Grant's generosity toward, 574 *ff.*; Lee's farewell address to his army, 577–578; his relation to the Confederate Government, and its interference in his plans, 580 *ff.*; his letter to the Hon. E. Barksdale quoted, 589–590; his personal relations to Jefferson Davis, 596 *ff.*; his army's lack of food and supplies, 600 *ff.*; letters to Jefferson Davis quoted, 605 *ff.*; his freedom from political ambition, 608–609, 643; Senator Hill's eulogy of, 609; letter to Grant regarding military convention, 613–614; Lee's clemency, 617–635; letters to his wife, to G. W. C. Lee, and others, 619 *ff.*; his general order from Chambersburg on invading Pennsylvania, forbidding devastation, 632–633; Lee's supreme greatness in defeat, 636 *ff.*; his noble dignity after the war, 642 *ff.*; uses his influence for the re-establishment of the Union, 643, 644 *ff.*; the devotion of his soldiers to, 645–646; refuses governorship of Virginia, 647; refuses com-

mercial offers, 647–648, 666; accepts presidency of Washington College, 648; feeling in the North against, 649 *ff.*; his examination by the committee of Congress, 650 *ff.*; his views on negro suffrage, 652; his own views on secession, 656; as college president, 660 *ff.*; author's impression of his personal appearance, 665–666; plans writing a history of the campaigns of his army, 667 *ff.*; his love for children, 670 *ff.*; his piety, 675–676; his humor, 677; his interview with Grant at the White House, 678; illness and death of, 678 *ff.*; Viscount Wolseley's high opinion of, 682–683; his character, 684–691; his order for the battle of Gaines's Mill, quoted, 695–697; statistics of his armies, 698–702; his report of the Gettysburg campaign, 703–713; his report of the surrender at Appomattox, 716–719.

Lee, Anne, sister of R. E. Lee, 6.

Lee, Mildred, sister of R. E. Lee, 6.

Lee, Henry, brother of R. E. Lee, 6, 11.

Lee, Charles Carter, brother of R. E. Lee, 6.

Lee, Sidney Smith, brother of R. E. Lee, 6, 565.

Lee, Agnes, daughter of R. E. Lee, 678.

Lee, Gen. G. W. C., *C.*, son of R. E. Lee, 63, 84, 471, 546; captured, 548–549, 556; 551, 555, 596; Lee's letter to, 619–620; 625–626, 682, 717.

Lee, Gen. W. H. F., *C.*, son of R. E. Lee, 269, 369, 455, 471, 476, 552, 625, 717.

Lee, R. E., son of Robert E. Lee, quoted, 624–625, 666, 675–676, 677, 678.

Lee, Gen. Fitzhugh, *C.*, nephew of R. E. Lee, quoted, 115; 276, 277, 278, 279, 316, 374, 408, 435, 437, 439, 444, 446, 456, 466, 471, 511, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 532, 550, 552, 553, 556, 558, 562, 571, 712, 718.

Lee, Gen. Charles, quoted, 15.

Lee, C. F., Jr., Lee's letter to, 668–669.

Lee, Gen. Stephen D., *C.*, quoted, 240; 241.

Lee, Adm. S. P., *U.*, 427.

Leigh, Maj. Watkins, *C.*, 285.

Letcher, Gov. John, Lee's letters to, 109–110, 644.

Lewis, Gen. Wm. G., *C.*, 431.

Lincoln, Abraham, offers Lee chief command of Union forces, 39–40; 92, 102, 125, 157; visits McClellan's army, 192; 195, 220, 252, 264–265, 295, 302, 377, 378; appoints Grant in command of U. S. army, 381; 383, 456, 468, 502, 503, 510, 550, 578, 611, 615, 642; assassination of, 643, 649, 650.

Lindsay, Lieutenant, 7.

Livermore, Col. Thomas L., quoted, 75, 423; his letter to author containing statistics of Confederate and of Federal armies, quoted, 702.

Lomax, Gen. L., *C.*, 511.

Long, Gen. A. L., *C.*, quoted on Lee's resignation from U. S. army, 61; 95, 140; quoted, 147; 151; quoted, 152, 163, 330, 376–377, 497, 668.

Longstreet, Gen. James, *C.*, 131, 132, 133, 139, 140–141, 143; his opinion of Lee, 145–146; 150–151, 158, 159, 165, 167, 168; quoted, 169–170, 171; 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182; quoted, 183–184; 185, 186, 188, 191, 199, 202, 204, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 223, 224, 226, 227, 231, 236, 239, 249, 251, 254, 255, 256, 257, 265, 287, 298, 299; his attitude toward Lee, 307 *ff.*; 314, 315, 316, 317, 320, 321, 322, 330, 331; his conduct at Gettysburg responsible for the defeat of Lee, 331 *ff.*; his defence of his failure to attack at Gettysburg, 344 *ff.*; 365, 366, 387; wounded, 389, 403; 392, 396, 398, 399, 401, 404, 406, 407, 411, 413, 436, 438, 439, 471, 478, 484, 520, 522, 539, 545, 550, 551, 556, 559, 569, 571, 573,

592, 596, 610, 611, 613, 617, 695, 702, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 711, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718.
Longstreet, Mrs. James, 611.
Loring, Gen. W. W., *C.*, 95, 103, 104, 586.

McCabe, J. D., quoted, 591.
McCall, Gen. Geo. A., *U.*, 179.
McClellan, Gen. G. B., *U.*, 92; successful against Garnett, 99 *ff.*; assumes command of Union forces, 101; 118, 119, 120; his campaign against Richmond, 125–144; repulsed by Lee on the Chickahominy, and at Malvern Hill, 148; his army circuited by Stuart, 153–155; defeated by Lee at Gaines's Mill and Cold Harbor, 162–173; retreats across White Oak Swamp, 175–177; 192, 193, 194, 197, 199, 212, 218, 220, 221; fails to relieve Harper's Ferry, 228; condition of his army, 230; fails to defeat Lee at Antietam, 231 *ff.*; fails to pursue Lee, 246; relieved of his command, 252; Lee's opinion of, 252–253; 392, 393, 395, 435, 449, 458, 459, 494, 500, 547, 599, 622, 627, 699.
McComb, Colonel, his opinion of Lee, 20.
McComb, Col. W., *C.*, 535.
McCoy, Colonel, 258.
McDowell, Gen. Irwin, *U.*, 90–91, 120, 131, 135, 136, 138, 143–144, 149, 192, 194, 207, 209, 210, 627.
McElroy, Colonel, *C.*, 166.
McGowan, Gen. S., *C.*, 322, 419, 527, 535.
McGowen, Colonel, *C.*, 166.
McGregor, battery of, *C.*, 529, 531.
McGuire, Hunter, 244.
McIntosh, Maj. D. S., *C.*, 237, 238, 325; quoted, 342–343, 634–635.
McLaughlin, Gen. N. B., *U.*, 521.
McLaws, Gen. Lafayette, *C.*, 177, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 233, 234, 235, 275, 277, 289, 292, 293, 298, 322, 334, 335, 336, 337, 341, 365, 702, 704.
McLean, Wilmer, 573.
McParlin, quoted, 442.
McPherson, Gen. J. B., *U.*, 379.
McRae, Gen. D., *C.*, 535.
Mackenzie, Gen. R. S., *U.*, 551.
Magruder, Gen. J. B., *C.*, 129, 130, 151, 164, 170, 176, 177, 178, 180, 181, 182, 191, 696.
Mahone, Gen. Wm., *C.*, 141, 159, 337, 402, 404, 415, 419, 421, 422, 439, 455, 456, 471, 473, 474, 476, 477, 478, 483, 546, 550, 551, 556, 717.
Malvern Hill, battle of, 148.
Manassas, first battle of, 90–92; second battle of, 206 *ff.*
Mansfield, Gen. J. K. F., *U.*, 232, 233.
Marshall, Col. Charles, *C.*, quoted, 372–373, 572, 573, 618.
Marshall, Capt. Louis H., *U.*, 193.
Martin, Gen. J. G., *C.*, 426.
May, Capt. James, mentioned, 64.
Mayo, Col. Jos., *C.*, 531.
Meade, Gen. Geo. G., *U.*, 232, 233, 257, 270, 292, 299, 309; supersedes Hooker, 319; 320, 322; at Gettysburg, 319 *ff.*; superseded by Grant, 357, 378; 364; his relation to Grant, 382–383; 407, 441, 450, 453, 454, 465, 468, 476, 479, 482, 485, 494, 528, 538, 550, 553, 558, 563, 572, 575, 604, 672, 708.
Meade, Rev. Dr. William, mentioned, 18.
Meagher, Gen. Thos. F., *U.*, 170, 173.
Meigs, General, his opinion of Lee, 22.
Meredith, Gen. Sol., *U.*, 325.
Merritt, Gen. W., *U.*, 527, 551, 554.
Miles, Gen. N. A., *U.*, 534, 538, 558.
Milledge's Battery, *C.*, 342.
Milroy, Gen. R. H., *U.*, 136, 149, 311, 315, 705.
Morell, Gen. G. W., *U.*, 162, 246.
Morrison, of Hill's staff, *C.*, 285.
Mosby, Col. John S., *C.*, 317.
Munford, Gen. Thos. T., *C.*, 227, 277, 279, 528, 529, 532, 558.

Nelson, Col. William, *C.*, 342, 633.
Newton, Gen. John, *U.*, 260.
Northrop, Col. L. B., Lee's letter to, 495; quoted, 601–602, 605.

O'Neal, Gen. E. A., *C.*, 321.
Ord, Gen. E. O. C., *U.*, 472, 479, 480, 525, 535, 539, 550, 557, 563, 566, 570, 571, 610, 611, 612.

Page, Maj. R. C. M., *C.*, 417.
Parke, Gen. J. G., *U.*, 477, 480, 482, 483, 522, 526, 535, 537, 538.
Patterson, Gen. Robert, *U.*, 88.
Pegram, Gen. John, 100, 418.
Pegram, Maj. W. J., *C.*, 325, 532.
Pelham, John, 257.
Pender, Gen. Wm. D., *C.*, 165, 166, 285, 298, 321, 322, 327, 341; Lee's high opinion of, 713.
Pendleton, Colonel, *C.*, 350.
Pendleton, Col. Alex. G., 187.
Pendleton, Gen. Wm. N., *C.*, 245, 246, 254, 260, 271, 286, 331, 559, 560, 679.
Perrin, Gen. Abner, *C.*, death of, 419.
Perry, Gen. E. A., *C.*, 337.
Petersburg, siege of, 467 *ff.*
Pettigrew, Gen. J. J., *C.*, 321, 341, 712, 713.
Pickett, Gen. Geo. E., *C.*, 169, 265, 298, 322, 336, 337, 338, 339, 341, 356, 365, 426, 431, 437, 438, 451, 498, 523, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533; his error at Five Forks, 534; 535, 541, 542, 551, 705, 709.
Pleasanton, Gen. Alfred, *U.*, 269, 278, 281, 282, 292, 310, 311, 316.
Poague, Col. Wm. T., *C.*, quoted, 331–332, 558.
Polk, Gen. L., *C.*, death of, 504.
Polk, Dr. William M., 577.
Pope, Gen. John, *U.*, 192, 193, 194, 197, 200; defeated at Second Manassas, 206 *ff.*; 218, 221, 366, 367, 547, 599, 622.
Porter, Gen. Fitz John, *U.*, 88, 146, 150, 152, 160, 164, 165, 169, 170, 172, 173, 180, 183, 191, 209, 210, 211, 212, 214, 231, 245, 246; charged by Pope with loss of battle of Second Manassas, 252; 276.
Posey, Gen. C., *C.*, 337.
Potter, Gen. R. B., *U.*, 419, 420, 470; *cf.* 537.
Preston, Colonel, 670.

Ramseur, Gen. S. D., *C.*, 321; wounded, 419; 461.
Randolph, General, 131, 132.
Ransom, Gen. Robt., *C.*, 159, 265, 428, 527, 529, 531, 696.
Read, Gen. Theo., *U.*, 557.
Reid, Hon. Whitelaw, quoted, 630.
Reno, Gen. J. L., *U.*, 209.
Reynolds, Gen. J. F., *U.*, 102, 107, 110, 211, 257, 292, 319, 323; death of, 326, 328.
Rhodes, J. F., quoted, 393, 499, 502, 503, 561, 628.
Richardson, Gen. I. B., *U.*, 140, 159, 234, 236.
Ricketts, Gen. J. B., *U.*, 207, 232, 233.
Ripley, Gen. R. S., *C.*, 143.
Robertson's Texans, 336.
Rodes, Gen. R. E., *C.*, 279, 280, 281, 298, 321, 327, 330, 411, 413, 419, 437, 461, 704, 705.
Rodgers, Commodore John, *U.*, 123.
Ropes, John C., quoted, 50–52, 162, 163, 201, 203, 225, 230, 232, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 245, 254.
Rosecrans, Gen. W. S., *U.*, 102, 110–111, 308, 365.
Rosser, Gen. T. L., *C.*, 469, 527, 528, 558.
Russell, Gen. D. A., *U.*, 369.

Salem Church, battle of, 293.
Santa Anna, 24.
Scales, Gen. A. M., *C.*, 322, 330, 535, 713.
Schofield, Gen. J. M., *U.*, 505, 515, 517, 518, 629.
Schurz, Gen. Carl, *U.*, quoted, 271, 280; 327.
Scott, Gen. W., *U.*, his opinion of Lee, 21, 23, 25; calls Lee "the

greatest soldier now living in the world," 26; Lee's letter of resignation to, 55–56; 85, 88, 189, 544, 577.
Seddon, J. A., Secretary of War, *C.*, 308, 492; Lee's despatch to, 509; 601; Lee's letter to, 604.
Sedgwick, Gen. John, *U.*, 139, 234, 235, 237, 266, 269, 270, 271, 275, 277, 280, 292, 293, 294, 310, 333, 346, 369, 375, 384, 396, 397, 399, 405, 412, 417, 672.
Semmes, Gen. P. J., *C.*, 336, 713.
Seven Pines, battle at, 139–140.
Seymour, Gen. Truman, *U.*, 405, 555.
Shaler, Gen. Alex., *U.*, 405.
Sharpsburg, battle of, 231 *ff.*
Sheridan, Gen. P. H., *U.*, 384, 408, 433, 435, 436, 437, 438, 446, 467; appointed in charge of forces guarding Washington, 469; 471, 479, 485, 517, 525, 527, 528, 529, 533, 534, 542, 550, 551, 552, 554, 556, 560, 563, 566, 570, 571.
Sherman, Gen. W. T., *U.*, 379, 385, 458, 503, 504, 505, 508, 509, 512, 515, 516, 518, 523; offers Johnston terms of surrender, 578; 599, 603; his ruthless devastations, 629 *ff.*
Shields, Gen. J., *U.*, 136, 157.
Sickles, Gen. D. E., *U.*, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 289, 292, 326, 334, 335, 336, 338, 344.
Sigel, Gen. Franz, *U.*, 206, 207, 208, 385, 386, 424, 445, 461, 501.
Slocum, Gen. H. W., *U.*, 170, 180, 237, 270, 287, 292, 326.
Smith, Gen. G. W., *C.*, 139, 140, 143; *cf.* 131.
Smith, Capt. J. P., *C.*, 285.
Smith, Gen. Wm., *C.*, 321.
Smith, Gen. Wm. F., *U.*, 237, 260, 428, 429, 436, 438, 439, 440, 449, 450, 457.
South Anna, 430 *ff.*
Spottsylvania Court House, battle of, 410 *ff.*
Stanton, E. M., Secretary of War, *U.*, 157, 700, 701.
Stark, Jack, 714.
Starke, Gen. Wm. E., *C.*, 113, 232.
Steele, quoted, 356.
Stephens, The Hon. Alex. H., 82–83, 93; quoted, 116; 118, 119, 595.
Steuart, Gen. George H., *C.*, 418, 527, 529, 532.
Stevens, Major, *C.*, 697.
Stevenson, Colonel, *C.*, 95.
Stevenson, Gen. T. G., *U.*, 403.
Stoneman, Gen. Geo., *U.*, 269, 518.
Stuart, Gen. J. E. B., *C.*, 29, 91, 152; makes a complete circuit of McClellan's army twice, 153–155, 160, 246–247; 174, 175, 191, 198, 200, 204, 205, 211, 220, 223, 224, 233, 234, 241, 256, 257, 269, 270, 276, 286, 289, 290, 309, 311, 315, 316, 317, 320, 321, 322, 338, 339, 355; his delay at Gettysburg, 356; 364, 367, 390, 404, 406, 407, 696, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 711.
Sturgis, Gen. S. D., *U.*, 260.
Sumner, Gen. E. V., *U.*, 28, 139, 140, 143, 170, 177, 180, 231, 234, 235, 237, 254, 257, 259; quoted, 391.
Sydnor, Lincoln, 187, 715.
Sykes, Gen. Geo., *U.*, 166, 246.

Tagart, ——, 678.
Taliaferro, Gen. W. B., *C.*, 256, 258.
Tatnall, Commodore Jos., *C.*, 134.
Taylor, Col. Walter H., *C.*, Lee's adjutant-general, 95, 104, 114, 163; quoted, 209, 259, 302–303; 328; quoted, 393, 404–405, 407, 562, 668, 702.
Terry, Gen. H. D., *U.*, 451.
Terry, Gen. W. R., *C.*, 527, 529, 531.
Thomas, Gen. E. L., *C.*, 166, 258, 322, 535, 539.
Thomas, George A., 88.
Thomas, Gen. George B., *U.*, 102, 123, 379, 505.
Thompson, Major, *C.*, death of, 557.
Tombs, Gen. Robert, *C.*, 151.
*Trent*, ship, 98.
Trimble, Gen. I. R., *C.*, 232, 341, 713.

Tucker, Com. J. R., *C.*, 546.
Turner, Gen. John W., *U.*, 537, 539.

Upton, Gen. Emory, *U.*, 413, 421.

Vaughan, Gen. A. J., *C.*, 445.
Vincent, Gen. Strong, *U.*, 335, 336.

Wadsworth, Gen. J. S., *U.*, 326, 330, 399; wounded, 403.
Walker, Gen. J. A., *C.*, 321.
Walker, Col. J. C., *C.*, 232.
Walker, Gen. J. G., *C.*, 223, 226, 234.
Walker, Gen. R. Lindsay, *C.*, 552, 718.
Walker, Gen. W. S., *C.*, 414.
Wallace, Gen. Lew, *U.*, 462, 465, 502, 527, 529.
Warren, Gen. G. K., *U.*, 335, 336, 367, 371, 384, 396, 407, 408, 411, 412, 417, 420, 421, 422, 432, 436, 437, 439, 447, 449, 472, 474, 477, 478, 480, 482, 483, 525, 527, 529, 531; relieved of his command by Sheridan, 533; 534.
Washburne, Col. Francis, *U.*, 556.
Washington, George, 8; portrait of, given to grandmother of R. E. Lee, 10; his character influencing Lee, 9–13, 60–61, 63–64; as a commander, 68; 609, 687.
Washington, Col. J. A., *C.*, 104; death of, 108–109, 110, 114.
Wayne, Mad Anthony, 8.
Weed, Gen. S. H., *U.*, 336.
Weems, Parson, 12.
Weiseger, Col. D. A., *C.*, 473.
Weitzel, Gen. G., *U.*, 548.
Wheaton, Gen. F., *U.*, 555.
Whiting, Gen. W. H. C., *C.*, 146, 151, 153, 168, 170, 171, 172, 181, 183, 428.
Whittier, Colonel, *C.*, 572.
Wickham, William F., 351.
Wilbourn, Capt. R. E., *C.*, 285.
Wilcox, Gen. C. M., *C.*, 169, 209, 292, 293, 336, 341, 397, 398, 399, 401, 415, 419, 420, 439, 455, 471, 475, 478, 483, 537, 539, 540, 545.
Wilderness campaign, the, 388 *ff.*, 395 *ff.*
Williams, Col. J. M., *C.*, 321.
Williams, S., 296.
Williams, Gen. Seth, *U.*, 567.
Williamsburg, battle at, 134.
Wilmer, Bishop, 636.
Wilson, Gen. James H., *U.*, 394, 405, 436, 449, 455, 456.
Winder, Gen. C. S., *C.*, 168.
Wirz, Captain, 658.
Wise, Gen. Henry A., *C.*, 102, 104, 105, 106, 110–111, 426, 448, 450, 451, 526, 527, 532, 550.
Wofford, Gen. W. T., *C.*, 336, 402.
Wolseley, Viscount, quoted, 5, 247, 682.
Woolfork, Captain, *C.*, 633.
Wright, Gen. A. R., *C.*, 159, 181, 182, 336, 337, 422, 473.
Wright, Gen. H. G., *U.*, 412, 417, 421, 437, 439, 440, 463, 525, 526, 535, 538, 539, 555, 558.
Wright, Gen. Marcus J., *C.*, 75; his letter to author containing statistics of Confederate and of Federal armies quoted, 698–701.

Young, John Russell, 566.

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APR 2 1991
MAY -4 1992
NOV 22 1992

NOV 1 1993
MAY 13 1994

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Robert E. Lee, man and soldier
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